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**Update on the Kosovo
Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Serb, Bosniak, Gorani and
Albanian communities in a minority situation**

UNHCR Kosovo, June 2004

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
PART 1: TRENDS IN SECURITY, CONFIDENCE TOWARDS LAW ENFORCEMENT AND FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT	
Context.....	5
PART 2: SITUATION OF MINORITY GROUPS BY REGION, WITH SPECIAL FOCUS ON CONDUCIVENESS TO RETURN UNTIL MARCH 2004	
A Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians.....	8
B Kosovo Serbs.....	18
C Kosovo Bosniaks.....	24
D Kosovo Gorani.....	28
E Kosovo Albanian ethnic minority.....	29
PART 3: SITUATION OF MINORITY GROUPS BY REGION IN LIGHT OF THE TURMOIL IN MARCH 2004	
A Inter-ethnic violence between 15 and 19 March 2004.....	31
B The situation of minorities after the civil unrest.....	39
C Overall conclusions.....	46
Appendix 1: Non-extensive list of selected incidents involving minorities, 1 January 2003 – 1 May 2004.....	48
Appendix 2: Summary of security incidents during involving minorities during the civil unrest 15-19 March 2004.....	58

Update on the Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Serb, Bosniak, Gorani and Albanian communities in a minority situation and the potential impact of unplanned returns of these minority groups to Kosovo in 2004

UNHCR Kosovo, June 2004

Introduction

UNHCR Kosovo has undertaken a critical review of the situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo to examine the relevance and applicability of the *UNHCR's Position Paper on the Continued International Needs of Individuals from Kosovo* issued in January 2003.

Increased forced minority returns from Western Europe in 2003 and the first months of 2004 continued to challenge the position held by UNHCR on the situation of ethnic minority groups. This has prompted UNHCR to enhance its minority returnee monitoring mechanism and capacity in all five regions in order to cope with increased voluntary and involuntary returnees and above all to monitor any evolving situation and conditions of minorities. The intensive returnee monitoring exercise which was conducted at the end of 2003 followed the same methodology as the previous year. UNHCR regional offices carried out interviews targeting forced returnees from Western Europe who returned between October 2002 and October 2003 as well as voluntarily and spontaneous returnees so as to capture the situation of ethnic minority groups in each region. Concerning the development of the security situation for minorities, UNHCR continuously follows up on incidents involving minorities through its regular contacts with the minority communities and the police. This paper covers security incidents involving minorities between January 2003 and April 2004.

Moreover, the March 2004 civil unrest saw violent attacks against minority communities and their properties, as well as against places of worship and public buildings allocated to these communities prompted a review of UNHCR's January 2003 position paper. A temporary position was published on 30 March 2004, highlighting that members of all minority groups, particularly Serbs, Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptians but also Bosniaks and Goranis should benefit from international protection in countries of asylum. It was felt that induced or forced return movements may not only put the individual's safety at risk but that they would also jeopardize the highly delicate ethnic balance and contribute to increasing the potential for new inter-ethnic clashes.

This paper is issued to underscore the update to the January 2003 *UNHCR Position on the Continued Protection Needs of Individuals from Kosovo*, which has just been issued in June 2004. In this respect, this paper represents an update to the supplementary report titled 'the Update on the Situation of Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Bosniak and Gorani in Kosovo' which had been published with the Position Paper of January 2003.

The report seeks to address three main areas of concern related to the situation of minorities and returns. Firstly, it analyses and highlights any changes—improvement or deterioration—in the situation of security, freedom of movement and access to public services as well as possible impact on the prevailing condition in Kosovo. Secondly, and in addition to updating the situation

of the minority groups which were previously analysed, i.e. the Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Bosniak and Gorani minorities, UNHCR Kosovo also reviewed the general situation of Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians originating from areas where they constitute an ethnic minority—the latter mostly originating from the northern municipalities in Mitrovica region. This section seeks particularly to examine the trend of returns which occurred in 2003 in an attempt to capture the general condition faced by each of the above mentioned ethnic minority communities in Kosovo. Thirdly, the March 2004 civil unrest and its impact on the minority communities is also analysed.

The paper concludes that although during the past year leading up to the inter-ethnic violence and civil unrest in March 2004, there had been continued improvements in general with regard to security, freedom of movement and access to services, members of minority communities continued to be targets for inter-ethnic harassment and violence, from stone-throwing, systematic theft to assault and killings. Moreover and as noted also in the previous Update of January 2003, the situation varies considerably between the ethnic minorities and the locations concerned. Particularly noteworthy was the increase in seriously violent crimes against the Kosovo Serb community since summer 2003. The March 2004 inter-ethnic violence took place over a period of 3 days and spread throughout Kosovo, reaching proportions not seen since 1999. Aside from Serbs, Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians who were directly targeted, other minority communities such as Bosniaks, Goranis and Turks were affected to some extent. The intensity of the violence clearly indicates the volatile security situation. UNHCR therefore reiterates its opinion that the overall situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo is not stable enough yet to speak of a fundamental and sustainable change in their situation. Hence the conditions in Kosovo are not yet conducive for the return of ethnic minorities, particularly for members of the Serb, Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian minority communities and Albanians in a minority situation.

Part 1: Trends in security, confidence towards law enforcement and freedom of movement between January 2003 and 15 March 2004

Context

Although the period between January 2003 and March 2004 saw further decline in the number of security incidents victimizing Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Bosniak and Gorani minorities in Kosovo, as compared to the previous reporting period covering April to October 2002, this positive trend was shattered by several high profile killings of Kosovo Serbs during the second half of 2003 and at the beginning of the year 2004.¹ Subsequently, while the overall number of security incidents targeting minorities decreased, the reporting period saw an increase in violent/severe crimes victimizing Kosovo Serbs, compared to 2002². These killings had a sobering effect on all minority residents, although Kosovo Serbs were most affected. As KFOR continued its 'unfixing' policy throughout Kosovo, new fixed checkpoints were temporarily set up and patrolling was increased after each killings, particularly in Peje/Pec region. Consequently, the degree of improvement in security and freedom of movement differs between the ethnic minorities and the regions as elaborated in detail in chapters below.

Kosovo Serbs remained the primary targets of inter-ethnic violence, not only in terms of the number of incidents or victims, but also in terms of the severity and cruelty of the crime. Serbs were victims of shootings and killings or even murders in Prishtine/Pristina, Peje/Pec and Gjilan/Gnjilane regions, and grenade and bomb attacks in Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Kosovo Roma mainly encountered physical assaults in Mitrovice/a region. Although the security situation of Kosovo Ashkaelia in Prishtine/Pristina regions improved compared to earlier reporting periods, a number of physical assaults in Obiliq/c town were reported particularly from residents of Plemetina Temporary Community Shelter. Ashkaelia in Lip(l)jan municipality faced grenade or arson attacks at their houses. Kosovo Egyptians have been victims of physical assaults and stonings in Peje/Pec region. For Kosovo Albanians living in urban North Mitrovice/a, the security situation remained volatile. Especially in the area of the "Three Towers"³, physical assaults and grenade attacks were frequent and stoning of cars and pedestrians crossing the main bridge occurred regularly. The situation of Bosniak and Gorani communities continued to improve, although their language, cultural and religious characteristics which are similar to those of the Serbs continued to limit their freedom of movement, access to basic services as well as access to economic opportunities.

Some of the most significant⁴ security incidents targeting a particular ethnic group are reported at the beginning of the respective sections of the report. In the Annex, the most severe incidents are listed by category of crime⁵.

¹ See list of selected events in Appenix 1.

² During 2002 only five Serbs were murdered, compared to 12 from January to November 2003. Although not all were necessarily ethnically motivated – perpetrators were found in only a few cases- the numbers are a clear indicator of increased violence against the Serb community. As a comparison, while the number of killed Serbs more than doubled, the total number of killed remained at the same level.

³ Three apartment blocks in Mitrovice/a North inhabited by Kosovo Albanians and guarded by KFOR 24-hours, uninterruptedly since 1999.

⁴ In terms of their effect or impact on the minority community and returns

A **sense of insecurity** was prevalent among many members of all minority communities and was susceptible to aggravation depending on sporadic security incidents. Even if the security risk in general was believed to be low in a particular location for a particular ethnic group, there could be specific allegations against particular individuals, which would put this individual's personal security at a high risk⁶. This sense of insecurity was often perpetuated by the **ineffectiveness** or sometimes even **inaction of the police forces**. Almost one out of ten reported incidents was closed because of lack of evidence. Roughly one third of the reported incidents were still under investigation or "inactive". Only approximately one fourth of the cases were referred to the public prosecutor. In one out of four incidents involving minority members as victims mentioned in the daily flash reports of UNMIK Police HQ, local and regional police stations could not find the case in their files⁷. The low level of resolved cases may also be attributed to the **lack of institutional safeguards** for follow-up on these crimes. Thus, there was no common understanding among the police of what constitutes an ethnically motivated or an inter-ethnic crime. It was often not recognized that even if inter-ethnic tensions or negative feelings towards a minority are not the sole motive for a criminal act, members of minorities are more vulnerable than members of the majority community, making them easy targets for crime⁸ and consequently greatly heightening their sense of insecurity. Since August 2003, special units in charge of inter-ethnic violence were set up in the Regional Police Stations throughout Kosovo. In practice, however, these also have their shortfalls.⁹ The low number of solved 'minority' cases together with the high number of unsolved, closed cases fed into a sense of impunity and highlighted the deficits of the rule of law.

Many incidents, often small-scale harassment, but also physical assaults, continued to go unreported. Such **non-reporting** may be caused by various factors including, the above mentioned ineffectiveness of the police, because the victims or witnesses fear persecution from the perpetrator or, because the victims do not want to heighten tensions with the majority community. Some victims may have been subjected to constant low level harassment over a longer period of time, and hence may not have regarded the incident as major enough to be reported. Even if a case was reported, victims and witnesses may not have wanted to identify the perpetrator for fear of repercussions, or simply withdrew their statements.¹⁰

⁵ Note: This is a non-exhaustive list of security incidents

⁶ Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, from Magura, Lip(l)jan municipality submitted to the police and to the Kosovo Albanian community a list of their community members who allegedly participated in looting and burning of houses together with the Serb forces.

⁷ This phenomenon was most prominent in Gjilan/Gnjilane region; on station level there was no consistent tracking of incidents involving minorities. The same applied to Mitrovice/a region: Although the assault of a Roma on 14 September was reported to the police and the case included in the daily security update prepared by UNMIK Police HQ, no investigation was opened. Neither the local police station in Vushtrri/Vucitrn nor the Regional Police HQ could find the case in their files.

⁸ As an example, the police did not consider the beating and subsequent throwing into the river of an elderly Kosovo Serb in Paralovo, Gjilan/Gnjilane region, an ethnically motivated crime, but rather caused by a dispute about the victim's cows.

⁹ In Gjilan/Gnjilane Regional Police Station, the ethnic Albanian Kosovo Police Officer appointed to track "ethnic and hate crimes" depends on the interpretation given to what constitutes an inter-ethnic crime by the local police stations and their subsequent reporting to him. Moreover, the daily flash reports and security updates, circulated by UNMIK Police HQ, are not consistently sent to local or regional police stations.

¹⁰ Hence police, particularly in Mitrovice/a region, often cited the unwillingness of the victim to co-operate as a reason for closing a case. In similar cases, the police in Pristine/Pristina region often concluded that the incidents were fabricated. As an example, the police believed the grenade attacks on Kosovo Ashkaelia

Members of all ethnic groups, but particularly the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, continued to rely on traditional preservation mechanisms, to deal with outside threats. Whether minor or serious, the decisions are usually made collectively within the community whether to opt for **traditional mediation** or report the incident to the authorities. If the community perceives a particular incident to critically undermine the sense of security maintained by the community as a whole, it may turn to the police to report the incident. The current environment of impunity, absence of rule of law and tight social network of the majority community undermines the confidence of the minority communities vis-à-vis law enforcement authorities; the minority community maintains an inclination not to disturb the fragile relations achieved with the majority community. Hence, mediation is still widely used for conflict solving, also in inter-ethnic conflicts. It is preferred as it provides for an agreement between the parties, rather than being imposed by a third party, the court, which could lead to further harassment.¹¹

The general lack of trust in the police authorities persisted¹². However, before the riots of 15-19 March 2004, an increase in the **level of confidence towards law enforcement authorities** could be observed among minorities compared to earlier reporting periods, varying slightly between region and ethnicity. Generally, Kosovo Bosniaks had greater trust in the police than members of the Roma, Ashkaelia or Egyptian communities. Regular patrolling by ethnically mixed police teams, community policing in minority areas, other crime prevention and confidence building activities combined with increased recruitment of minority members into the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have indeed enhanced the confidence in the law enforcement authorities. This slowly and gradually gained trust in the law enforcement authorities was shattered by the events between 15 and 19 March 2004.

The association to majority and/or minority communities, perception of the majority communities, personal history including relationship to majority population prior to departure, experiences during the conflict, time, nature and reason for departure from/return to Kosovo, level of re-integration, confidence in law enforcement, language abilities and the location all influence the objective and subjective sense of security, and their subsequent impact on the possibilities to exercise freedom of movement, access to basic services, employment etc. Due to the complexity of these factors, the situation varies considerably between the minority communities and even between members of these communities, in the various municipalities.

houses in Mali Alas/Halaq e Vogel in August 2003 were created by the victims themselves in order to demonstrate how difficult their conditions are and to gain sympathy as to avoid payment of electricity bills.

¹¹ Depending on the severity of crime, the mediation may or may not restrain the court from completing the procedures. A case in point is the intimidation, threat and attempt to extort money from a Kosovo Egyptian on 14 February 2004 in Peje/Pec region. The court closed the case because the victim had withdrawn the charges after the perpetrator's family had visited him and apologized. An opposite example is the case of assault and robbery of a Kosovo Roma in Zvecan municipality on 15 August 2003. The three Kosovo Serb perpetrators were arrested on the spot. In the conjunction of the assault, the car of the victim was damaged. When the perpetrators paid the victim for the damage of the car, the victim wanted to stop the court procedures. The procedures went ahead nevertheless.

¹² Reported in the last Update of January 2003

Part 2: Situation of minority groups by region, with special focus on conduciveness to return up to March 2004

A. Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptians

The still volatile security situation Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians found themselves in is illustrated by the following chronology of major **security** incidents involving victims of these communities during the reporting period:

In the Cesmin Lug Temporary Community Shelter (TCS), Mitrovice/a North, an unknown person, allegedly armed with a machine gun and hand grenades, poured gasoline on the face of a Roma boy, set him ablaze on 26 January 2003¹³; the perpetrator fled the scene while the victim was hospitalised for burn injuries. Assaults of Egyptians took place on 22 May 2003 in Istok/g and on 31 May 2003 in Kline/a. On 26 June 2003, two Ashkaelia women from Plemetina TCS were assaulted and beaten by a Kosovo Albanian in Obilic/q town. Three weeks later, on 18 July 2003 an Ashkaelia male from Plemetina was stabbed and robbed. An Ashkaelia family in Hallaq, Lip(l)jan municipality, was attacked for the ninth time on 21 July 2003, with a grenade allegedly thrown into their garden; no injuries reported.¹⁴ On 14 August 2003, three grenade attacks on Ashkaelia houses in Halaq e Vogel/Mali Alas, Lip(l)jan municipality were followed one week later by two Ashkaelia houses set on fire in Lip(l)jan town. For the first time since the return process to Magure/a, Lip(l)jan Municipality, had started in 2002, a security incident occurred on 14 January 2004 when an explosive ordinance was thrown in front of a Kosovo Ashkaelia house¹⁵. The same day, a Kosovo Ashkaelia house in Vushtrri/Vucitrn was allegedly set on fire, causing damages to the roof. A Kosovo Egyptian was shot at and injured by unknown person(s) in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje on 03 March 2004 when he collected metallic disposals. In Peje/Pec region, Kosovo Egyptians were again victims of physical assaults on 05 February 2004 in Gjakove/Dakovica Municipality and of a stoning and shooting at K-Egyptian houses at the end of April 2004 in Peje/Pec municipality.

Non-reporting of incidents was especially prevalent among Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians in Gjakove/Djakovica and Kline/a municipalities, Peje/Pec region¹⁶. These communities often rely on the traditional preservation mechanisms of mediation.

Despite the incidents listed above, the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities continued to experience a gradual improvement in their security and **freedom of movement** throughout Kosovo. However, there were significant differences between the communities and locations in the level of freedom of movement enjoyed, reflecting a wide range of (in)security. In general, a sense of fear prevailed, and the Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians still sought safety in larger groups, in overcrowded and often informal settlements with appalling sanitation and infrastructure.

¹³ The motive may be a non-ethnically related dispute between the brother of the boy and the perpetrator

¹⁴ In 2001, three family members of this same family were killed when stepping on a booby trap placed at their doorstep.

¹⁵ Although the motive of the attack is not clear, the minority community in the village felt threatened and for weeks after the incident did not leave their houses at night and were hesitant to travel outside the village.

¹⁶ Examples are mentioned in the section on Peje/Pec region, pages 14-16.

A.1 Prishtine/Pristina Region

Traditionally, the predominantly Serb-speaking Roma and the Albanian-speaking Ashkaelia have been living in separate communities in Prishtine/Pristina region, while the very few Albanian-speaking Egyptians are closely associated with the Ashkaelia communities. Hence, in general, the situation of the Roma is more similar to that of the Serbs in the area, while the Ashkaelia and Egyptians are better integrated with the majority population.

In some areas where Kosovo Roma and Ashkaelia/Egyptian are indistinguishable, the condition and level of integration with the majority community fared better and the level of freedom of movement of the Roma was similar to that of the Ashkaelia.¹⁷ In Podujevo municipality, most of the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians are Albanian speakers and the majority of the displaced Roma and Ashkaelia/Egyptian communities returned with the Albanian IDPs and refugees immediately after 1999. There have been three to four Roma families who returned in recent years and they are well-integrated with the rest of the population in the municipality.

The level of perception of security and integration with the majority community are also reflected in the return patterns. While the Ashkaelia voluntary returns to their place of origin in the region doubled in 2003 compared to 2002, there was a slight drop in the returns of Roma. The latter mainly returned to the Serb majority township of Gracanica, Prishtine/Pristina municipality, Plemetina village in Obiliq/c municipality and to Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje.

However, many villages and neighbourhoods throughout the region remain void of Roma and/or Ashkaeli inhabitants as a result of attacks or threats following June 1999.¹⁸ From November 2002 to October 2003, only one organised return movement to neighbourhoods until then void of Roma or Ashkaeli inhabitants occurred¹⁹, and no spontaneous returns to such areas. This highlights the weak and tenuous situation in the region. Security but also property issues as well as general living conditions are combined factors that contribute to this status quo despite high expectations that this first return would 'snowball' into additional spontaneous return movements.

A rise in confidence in law enforcement agencies was observed only amongst the Ashkaelia communities in the region. Confidence-building measures, such as community policing by KPS and ethnically mixed patrolling in minority areas were major contributing factors, along with improved and rapid response of the police, particularly in Shtime/Stimlje municipality.

Ashkaelia and Egyptians

Improvement in the general situation of Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities can - apart from a decline in ethnically motivated attacks - be measured from palpable changes in attitudes particularly of municipal authorities, such as less frequent use of threatening language, of referral to perceived involvement in serious crimes committed during the conflict and to collective guilt by association.

¹⁷ This is the case in places like Shtime/Stimlje municipality and the villages of Magura and Dobraj e Vogel/Mala Dobraja in Lipjan/Lipljane municipality.

¹⁸ For a listing of main such areas, please consult previous Update of January 2003, page 9.

¹⁹ This organized return took place in Azotiku suburb of Obiliq/c town, and comprised of families mostly displaced in the nearby Plemetina TCS. The preparations for the return project started in 2002, and were marred by a series of security related incidents. Similarly organized return movements of Ashkaelia IDPs continued to Magura and Dobraj e Vogel/Mala Dobraja villages in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, already reported in the previous update of January 2003.

The Ashkaelia community significantly increased its exercise of freedom of movement, both in terms of frequency of travel outside their villages or towns as well as geographically. They begun increasingly to use majority-run public transportation while until recently a predominant number preferred to use private mode of transportation²⁰. Improvement in freedom of movement can also be measured by the expansion of the areas of travel particularly in relation to Prishtine/Pristina town. Whereas in 2002, most of the Ashkaelia were still reluctant to come to the town, they now increasingly travelled there as well as to other municipalities. While this increased exercise of freedom of movement is a very positive development, it has to be noticed, that it still can bring increased security risks with it. Several security incidents involving Ashkaelia going to Obiliq/c town, as reported above, underline this point.

Roma

Kosovo Roma continued to live in close association with the Kosovo Serb community, and hence still faced limitations of freedom of movement, feeling safe only in areas predominantly inhabited by Serbs. The majority of the Roma confidently only moved within the village/town and they rarely ventured outside their village or immediate environs. Some of the Roma families interviewed by UNHCR expressed fear even to move within the village; however, this can be seen as an exception to the rule. A major factor for this limited freedom of movement and fear is attributed to their poor proficiency in Albanian. The fact that no Roma return has taken place in Prishtine/Pristina town continued to shape the perception of fear among many Roma. The exception is the former inhabitants of the Dodona/Moravska neighbourhood in the town, many of whom speak Albanian as well as Serbian and Romany and thus enjoyed relative freedom of movement. They begun to regularly visit their neighbours, and the first returns took place end of 2003²¹. Roma from Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje municipality were still reluctant to travel to Prishtine/Pristina town and those living in Gracanica were equally limited in their freedom of movement as the Serb population.

In general, the Roma population in this region continued to live in overcrowded areas and neighbourhoods with often substandard living conditions.

Possible impact of unplanned and/or large-scale return movements

Particularly the fact that during the reporting period, no returns, with the exception of one organised return movement, has taken place to areas until then void of Roma, Ashkaelia and/or Egyptians, indicate that the general environment is not yet conducive for large-scale returns of members of Roma, Ashkaeli or Egyptian communities. Hence unplanned and/or large-scale return movements could lead to security problems and secondary displacement, mostly to the current host locations such as the overcrowded settlements and neighbourhoods in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje and Plemetina TCS in Obiliq/c.

A.2 Gjilan/Gnjilane Region

As for Prishtine/Pristina region, security and freedom of movement of Ashkaelia differ from that of the Roma in Gjilan/Gnjilane region, depending on their actual or perceived affiliation with Serbs or Albanians.

²⁰ However, the attack at an Ashkaelia house in Magure/a, Lip(l)jan Municipality, mentioned above on page 7, shows what an impact even isolated security incidents can have on the exercise of freedom of movement of a whole community

²¹ A total of 4 families have returned until end of April 2004.

Ashkaelia

Most of the Ashkaelia population in the region is concentrated in Ferizaj/Urosevac municipality. With no security incidents reported during the period under review and being Albanian speakers, the Ashkaelia region-wide feel more comfortable to travel further than their surrounding villages, compared to the Roma living in the same area. Part of the feeling of security may be the large size of the community, which is the largest resident Ashkaelia population in Kosovo. This community is well represented in the municipal structures, is well integrated and has established access to public services²². Despite the decent security and political representation, the living conditions of Ashkaelia are below any acceptable standard. Periodic outbreaks of tuberculosis are commonplace.

However, even in Ferizaj/ Urosevac municipality, while the situation reached a fragile equilibrium in the town and the adjacent Dubrava village, there were locations still empty of any minority population, whether Ashkaeli or Roma.²³

Roma

Only a few incidents were reported involving Kosovo Roma in the region, and none of them turned out to be ethnically motivated. This may not necessarily adequately reflect the feeling of security of the Roma, especially in Gjilan/Gnjilane town, since their confidence in the police is very low. Incidents were not consistently reported for fear of tensions with the majority community²⁴. This low level of confidence in the rule of law was compounded by the fact that only a few members of the Roma and none of the Ashkaelia community could be recruited to the KPS in Gjilan/Gnjilane region²⁵.

For the Roma, the level of security, freedom of movement and access to services was higher in locations where Serbs enjoyed a more stable situation, such as in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Kamencia and Novo Brdo municipalities.²⁶ In these municipalities, their freedom of movement improved in urban areas and Roma travelled between villages, especially in areas where Serbs constitute the majority. They still did not venture beyond the boundaries of the Northern part of Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Like the Serbs, the Roma residents of Gjilan/Gnjilane town started to utilise the majority-run buses connecting Bujanovac in Southern Serbia²⁷. The majority of the Roma living in the Northern part of the Gjilan/Gnjilane region continued to access services used by the Serb community and many travelled to Vranje, Serbia to access secondary medical care.

Nevertheless, the continued illegal occupation of properties and presence of Kosovo Albanians originating from nearby villages and of ethnic Albanian IDPs from southern Serbia had perpetuated a sense of insecurity among the Roma residents in Abdullah Presheva neighbourhood

²² They achieved high enrolment in catch-up classes sponsored by the municipality, which has run a well functioning Municipal Community Office with sub-offices in Ashkaelia neighbourhoods. No major problems were reported related to access to education and attending Albanian schools.

²³ Plesina/ Pleshine village, Gornje Nerodimlje/ Nerodime e Epërme, Tankosiq/ Tankosic, Vshati Vjeter/ Staro Selo, and smaller groups in other villages

²⁴ A Kosovo Roma who returned from Serbia fall 2003 encountered verbal threats and rock throwing. He stated being aware of neighbours or relatives facing security incidents, none of whom reported to the police

²⁵ Recruitment opportunities were offered to the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities, but the lack of qualified candidates with completed secondary education was a significant obstacle.

²⁶ On the other hand, in Strpce/Shterpce, negative perceptions of Kosovo Roma are held by both Kosovo Serb and Albanian communities

²⁷ The commercial links of the region has traditionally been stronger with urban centers like Bujanovac or Vranje in southern Serbia than with Prishtine/Prishtina. This is particularly true for the Roma community in the northern part of the region.

in Gjilan/Gnjilane town²⁸. Furthermore, the living conditions of the Roma remained sub-standard and deplorable, as they continued living concentrated in specific urban areas²⁹.

In Kamenice/a municipality, the situation of Roma residents remained stable with no security incidents reported. Many travelled to the mixed market in Kamenice/a town as well as to Gjilan/Gnjilane town. Roma in Domorovce village used majority run bus lines to travel to Kamenice/a town. However, although stability has been maintained, there were no far-reaching improvements leading to returns in the villages empty of their former Roma population, underscoring a precarious situation of this group.³⁰

Roma IDPs displaced from Albanian villages within the municipality of Strpce/Shterpce continued to endure verbal harassment and discrimination from surrounding Serb population. Roma representatives maintained that their communities were caught in-between two fires as both Serbs and Albanians continued to perceive them as collaborators.

Small-size communities of Roma were dispersed in Viti/na municipality, where they are mostly fully integrated into the Serb community. Most of them do not declare themselves as Roma. Especially in Viti/na town and Zitinje, the situation remained volatile, although no incidents were reported to the police, most likely due to the small size of the minorities concerned. It is believed that if any Roma were to return to a village currently empty of its Roma and/or Serb population they could face severe repercussions due to the strong locally perceived link between the two groups.

Although Roma experienced improvements in Ferizaj/Urosevac municipality, where the Kosovo Roma population doubled during the reporting period to 259 persons (still a fraction of the original Roma population), they remained much more cautious both in terms of accessing public services and moving in the wider area. This is an indication of the linkage between linguistic affiliation and perceived ethnic affiliation, which affects the confidence the Roma have with members of the majority population, consequently affecting their freedom of movement.

Possible impact of unplanned and/or large-scale return movements

The fact that no Roma nor Ashkaelia returned to areas void of their minority communities, such as Kacanik town, various locations in Viti/na and in Gjilan/Gnjilane, Ferizaj/Urosevac and Kamenica municipalities, highlights the still precarious security situation. It must be pointed out that Ashkaelia, just as Roma, would be at a great risk if returning to areas currently vacant of other minorities. In these villages, any return of either the Roma or the Ashkaelia would meet with fierce opposition, forcing returnees to retreat to secondary displacement either in town or, to FYR Macedonia. Of particular mention is Kacanik municipality, where any return of Roma in the nearly mono-ethnic Albanian Kacanik municipality would create a clear security risk,³¹ as the majority Albanian communities there indicated explicitly to UNHCR that no Roma return will be accepted.

²⁸ Two Kosovo Roma returnees who returned from Serbia and Montenegro fall 2003 to Abdulla Presheva neighbourhood in Gjilan/Gnjilane town stated that they do not even move around freely in their neighbourhood for security reasons.

²⁹ Before 1999 they mainly lived dispersed in both urban and rural areas, Update January 2003, page 10.

³⁰ Ogoshte, Koretin, Bosce, and Rogacica; only one family remain in Rogacica.

³¹ Out of the formerly 201 Roma inhabitants in Hani i Elezit and 61 in Kacanik town, only one family was left in Kacanik living in destitute conditions. The family managed to survive only due to a common law marriage to an Albanian woman.

A.3 Prizren Region

Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian

Unlike in other regions, there is no clear distinction between Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians in Prizren region, neither in terms of self-identification, nor in terms of language abilities and not in the general situation, particularly in the traditionally multi-cultural Prizren town.³² They have all attempted to integrate and usually adopted the predominant language in their neighbourhood, Albanian or Serbian/Bosniak. Hence most Roma also speak Albanian.³³ This also reflects the persistent fear of being perceived to be linked to Kosovo Serbs with all its attributes, and the wish not to draw any attention within this still fragile environment.³⁴

Security incidents involving members of this community further decreased during the reporting period. Only a few of the reported incidents may have been ethnically motivated; investigations were still ongoing³⁵. This, combined with the perception of improved response by KPS through confidence-building measures, led to a slight rise in confidence towards the police. This perception resulted in an increase in the exercise of freedom of movement. Some Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians from Prizren and Rahovec/Orahovac started to move beyond the region in 2002 and many more followed in 2003. The fact that the majority of the Roma, Ashkaeli and Egyptian returns recorded in the region took place to Rahovac/Orahovac and to Prizren municipalities underscored this general improvement. Greater mobility led to increased access to public services, including education and social assistance, and towards integration with the majority community. Notwithstanding, many Roma, Ashkaeli and Egyptians from villages in Rahovac/Orahovac municipality continued to live in displacement in Prizren, and the minority communities in the region remained marginalised, with a critical housing situation and lack of income opportunities.

In Prizren municipality, the pre-conflict Roma population overwhelmingly remained (estimated 90%), enjoying full freedom of movement in the municipality and beyond. Roma returns to the region mainly took place to mixed areas such as Prizren town and the village of Landovice where in these mixed areas, they had increased interaction with the majority community, supported by enjoying full freedom of movement.³⁶

Suhareke/Suva Reka remained the most difficult municipality in the region for Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians, being the only municipality in the region where none of them returned in 2003³⁷.

³² See previous Update of January 2003. It is estimated that Roma constitute the largest group, followed by Ashkaeli, while the Egyptian communities are very small.

³³ In urban areas they tend to identify themselves as Roma, while in rural areas as Ashkaeli or Egyptians.

³⁴ Many interviewees were reluctant to disclose or be forthcoming in their answers to the interviews of UNHCR, indicating reluctance to draw attention to their plight, combined with a sense of abandonment.

³⁵ In September 2003, a Kosovo Roma house was set on fire by unknown person(s). The police determined the incident not to be ethnically motivated since the victim reportedly had significant financial debts to various people. Nevertheless, it is interesting to note that some local officials working with the community voiced the possibility of the incident being ethnically motivated.

³⁶ Please refer to previous Update of January 2003, page 13.

³⁷ Although about two thirds of the pre-war population remained, mainly in the mixed villages of Ternje, Gelance and Leshan, Suhareke/Suvareka municipality represents the largest scale of displacement among the Roma, Ashkaeli and Egyptian communities in the Prizren region, and has proven to be the most difficult municipality to return to in the region. In some cases the Roma, Ashkaelia or Egyptians are rather identifying themselves as Albanians, for security reasons. Only a small number of Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptian community are residing in Suhareke/Suva Reka town, where they tend to be viewed as Serb

Only one Roma and one Ashkaeli/Egyptian in total have returned since year 2000³⁸. The collective Albanian perception that many Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians were collaborators with the Serb regime is difficult to erase in that municipality,

Despite the improvements in security and freedom of movement in the region in general, no Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians returned during the reporting period to places void of their communities.³⁹

Possible impact of unplanned and/or large-scale return movements

The above fact that no returns have taken place to locations void of their minority communities, indicates that the security situation is still viewed as fragile. Moreover, given the prevailing hostility of the majority community in Suhareke/Suva Reka municipality, any forced returns to this municipality would have an adverse impact on the security situation of the remaining resident Roma community and may result in secondary displacement. Finally, the fact that the ethnic self-identification as Roma, Ashkaeli or Egyptian of individuals from this region are not necessarily very clear, requires greater scrutiny and thorough screening in relation to forced minority returns, in order to avoid putting the returnee or the remaining minority community at risk.⁴⁰

A. 4. Peje/Pec Region

Although there was a notable decrease in security incidents of serious nature targeting the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities⁴¹ during the reporting period⁴², the volatile political situation and general violence added to the sense of insecurity not only felt amongst minority communities but also shared by the majority community in the region. In some cases the return of members of these minorities to their communities of origin remains prevented by various security threats which persist and lack of/or majority population contested property rights.⁴³ An increasing number of Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptians begun to exercise an expanded freedom of movement but many only dared to do so during the day and did not venture out at night.

collaborators to a higher degree than in rural areas. Shiroke is the only village completely void of its Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian inhabitants in this municipality.

³⁸ The returns took place to Nepresht village and Suhareke/Suvareka urban respectively.

³⁹ Places void of all minorities in Prizren region are the villages Shiroke and Peqan in Suhareke/Suva Reka municipality and certain neighborhoods in Suhareke/Suva Reka town. Regarding Peqan, two out of the five Ashkaelia families residing there before the conflict, are displaced in Prizren, the other three families abroad. Both families living in Prizren had access to their properties in the village and one head of household maintained his pre-conflict job in Suhareke/Suva Reka but despite continuous encouragement of the majority community, did not want to permanently return.

⁴⁰ Based on interviews conducted by UNHCR, some Kosovo Roma were identified as 'Ashkaelia' or 'Egyptian' and returned from Europe.

⁴¹ The self-identification as Ashkaeli or Egyptian is not necessarily consistent in Peje/Pec region, though community leaders consider Peje/Pec region mainly being populated by Egyptians, with the exception of Klina municipality, which is populated by Ashkaelis. The overwhelmingly largest number of Roma is found in Gjakova/Djakovica municipality.

⁴² The most serious one related to an explosive device thrown at two Kosovo Roma males repairing their car in Peje/Pec on 28 October 2003, resulting in one of the Roma men being hospitalised. The police do not consider this an ethnically motivated crime since one of the victims is a businessman.

⁴³ UNHCR is aware of a few Egyptian and Roma families, who following their return were forced to secondary displacement (e.g. in Gjakove/Djakovica, Istog/k, Deçan/Decani, and Pejë/Pec municipalities). Additionally, the lack of will, capabilities or authority (e.g. KTA administered land) on the side of local institutions to pursue remedial or practical solutions impedes returnees ability to regain their property.

Non-reporting of incidents continued to prevail amongst the Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptian communities in the region. While Roma tended not to report security incidents to the police for fear of retribution, leaders of the Egyptian community indicated that their community increasingly has gained trust in the KPS which is probably linked to the recruitment of members of their community into the police.⁴⁴

Region-wide, the Egyptian community has stronger representation within institutions leaving the impression of a better integration starting-point within the society. This however, does not necessarily represent the reality for the whole group and is often influenced by individual/family history; relation to the majority population prior and after the departure; experiences and behaviors during the conflict; time and reasons for departure from Kosovo, education background, etc.

Most of the Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptians in this region had access to public services including health, social services, and education although numerous children did not attend school, predominantly because of economic difficulties. Generally-speaking, lack of adequate information and discrimination remain issues of concern when accessing public services.

The problem of abysmal and sub-standard conditions of overcrowded communities also hosting IDPs continued to exacerbate the overall socio-economic situation of the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians in the region, as well as the social cohesion within the community itself, often leading to further marginalisation, domestic violence and illiteracy. Above all, Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians in general continued to face insurmountable obstacles related to access to and contested property rights including lack of adequate documentation. This factor seriously hampers their re-integration.

Roma

Few security incidents involving Roma victims were reported and none of them have been proven to be ethnically motivated. This does not reflect the actual difficult security situation, as non-reporting for fear of revenge seems to be common. Nevertheless and despite the unstable environment, Roma in Peje/Pec municipality continued to expand their area of movement and many travelled regularly to Prishtine/Pristina. This maybe attributed to the past inter-ethnic relationship between the majority and the Roma community in Peje/Pec municipality, described to be relatively close.

Ashkaelia and Egyptians

In Kline/a municipality, night-time attacks at houses and properties as well as theft of cattle occurred. The minority communities provided easy targets for these incidents, especially since due to their precarious situation they were reluctant to report even more severe security incidents, such as beating and threats.⁴⁵ Similarly, the minority communities in Gjakove/Djakovica municipality were victims of crimes⁴⁶ and threats⁴⁷.

⁴⁴ Nine Egyptians have been recruited to KPS compared to 4 Roma and 3 Ashkaelia, in Peje/Pec region. The fact that less Roma have been recruited is rather linked to lack of required education

⁴⁵ Kline/a municipality is located in the so-called 'Drenica region', a stronghold of Kosovo Liberation Army and cradle of strong Albanian national sentiment, which may influence inter-ethnic relations.

⁴⁶ The Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian population in this municipality have been able to enjoy relative freedom of movement, particularly within the municipality and hence to launch successful businesses as blacksmiths, metal workers etc. They have acquired relative wealth in a short period of time and are subsequently becoming as minority communities easy targets for crime. In 2003, UNHCR recorded 3

Possible impact of unplanned and/or large-scale return movements

Recently obtained confidence in security and relative improvement in freedom of movement cannot be overplayed in a case of large-scale return or increased pace in forced minority returns including Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians from Western Europe to this region. Keeping in mind the overcrowded ghetto-like communities in many areas of the region, any large-scale forcible returns would result in immediate secondary displacement or departure from Kosovo. Sensitive and fragile inter-ethnic relations between the majority and the Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptians communities are increasingly worsened by distribution of diminishing resources in Kosovo.

A.5. Mitrovice/a Region

During 2003 and until 17 March 2004, only few security incidents involving Kosovo Ashkaelia were reported⁴⁸. Kosovo Roma displaced in the north, with full freedom of movement in the north but severely restricted freedom of movement in the south, continued to be subjected to serious security incidents.⁴⁹ In contrast, the Roma, Ashkaelia, and Egyptian communities in Leposavic/q municipality⁵⁰, living along the majority Kosovo Serb population, remained generally undisturbed⁵¹.

Ashkaelia

While the overall situation for Ashkaelia in Mitrovice/a region was still fragile during the year 2002, security and freedom of movement considerably improved in 2003, both in Mitrovice/a South and Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality until the March 2004 riots. Several Ashkaelia exercised freedom of movement Kosovo-wide, with some exceptions, such as Mitrovice/a South, where they restricted their movements to daytime and only certain parts of the town. All 39 Ashkaelia families originating from Stari Trg/Sheshi Vjeter and Prvi Tunel/Tuneli Pare, Mitrovice/a south, remained displaced. While the general situation remained static, several Ashkaelia families displaced in northern collective centres started to exercise freedom of movement to their villages of origin and met with their former neighbours. Many Ashkaelia houses were still occupied by Kosovo Albanian IDPs, who are not welcoming possible return.

reported security incidents targeting 2 Egyptian and 1 Roma, whereas during the first 10 weeks of 2004 in Gjakove/Djakovica 4 incidents were reported/recorded targeting 1 Ashkaelia and 3 Egyptians. Gjakove/Djakovica has the highest crime rate in general in Kosovo.

⁴⁷ UNHCR is, among others, aware of two Egyptian forced returnee families, who were threatened by the Kosovo Albanian illegal occupants and hence unable to return to their houses. A family returning from Germany to Gjakove/Djakovica town was requested to pay 25,000 euro to the Kosovo Albanian illegal occupant to get their house back. A returnee family from Switzerland was threatened too.

⁴⁸ Three attacks on Ashkaelia property in Vushtrri/Vucitrn have been reported: Stoning of Ashkaelia houses on 27 May 2003 and on 27 July 2003, as well as the alleged arson of an Ashkaelia house on 14 January, mentioned above on page X.

⁴⁹ In addition to the Roma boy set ablaze in Zitkovac, above page X, mention should be made to the following incidents: An unknown male stopped his car close to a Roma, walking along the street in Mitrovice/a north, and beat him, on 8 July 2003; Three Serbs assaulted and robbed a Roma in Zvecan on 15 August. The suspects in the latter case have been arrested and the case submitted to the prosecutor.

⁵⁰ The Ashkaeli and Egyptian communities represent mostly IDPs living alongside the Roma.

⁵¹ Similarly, the situation of the small Roma community in the Serb enclave of Priluzje/Prellhuze village remained stable in 2003.

In Vushtrri/Vucitrn town, the labour intensive organised return of Ashkaelia IDP families in 2002 slowly impacted positively on the Ashkaelia community as a whole.⁵² Until the riots in March 2004, the Ashkaelia enjoyed unrestricted freedom of movement particularly in the town, and had access to public services. The children attended school side by side with Kosovo Albanian children. Despite some incidents,⁵³ an increase in confidence towards the police was noted, possibly due to KPS' successful confidence-building measures in forms of rapid deployment of mixed patrols and ubiquitous community policing. It also allowed a few spontaneous returns of Ashkaelia IDPs to Vushtrri/Vucitrn town and jump-started new organised return processes in the region.⁵⁴ In contrast, there were no returns of Ashkaelia IDPs to the formerly mixed village of Novo Selo/Maxhunaj, despite the first organised return of Kosovo Serbs being underway. This indicated that Ashkaelia still fear for their safety in some parts of the municipality.

In Skenderaj/Srbica municipality, UNMIK tried to engage Ashkaelia IDPs to consider possible returns, particularly to the village of Dashevs/Dosevac, where four Ashkaelia returnees were killed in 2000. The chilling effect of this murder continued to reverberate and many IDPs were still reluctant to return to this municipality. The economically depressed conditions did not help the environment and further compounded the prospect for future return to this village.

Roma

Roma IDPs remained displaced in the camps in the North, facing obstinate resistance by the receiving communities in places such as the Roma Mahala in south Mitrovice/a. The deteriorating conditions in displacement, closure of collective centres and informal settlements in Serbia prompted ten Roma and one Ashkaelia family to return into displacement in deplorable conditions in the Kablar barracks in north Mitrovice/a, waiting for a durable solution; The environment is still not conducive for safe and sustainable return to the region.

Another example of the tenuous situation is the slow progress of returns to the Roma Mahala in Mitrovice/a South, where 6-7,000 Roma families lived before the conflict. Intensive inter-ethnic dialogue initiatives are expected to result in the agreement of the majority community to allow return to the Mahala. The former inhabitants, many now displaced in the northern municipalities expressed fearing harassment from both the majority Albanian community in the south and the majority Serb community in the north, would they return to the Mahala.⁵⁵

Possible impact of unplanned and/or large-scale return movements

Despite the developments towards stability for the Ashkaelia community in Vushtrri/Vucitrn town, any large scale forced returns from Europe would have negative consequences to this hard won stability. The community would not have the capacity to absorb returnees due to lack of housing; the returns would likely result in secondary displacement. The tolerance demonstrated by the majority community when it concerns return of a few families, should not be overestimated should higher numbers return simultaneously and given the current difficult economic conditions in the region. Forced returns to other areas in Mitrovice/a region would have a negative impact on the fragile return process in the region as a whole. Unless the issue of illegal occupation is properly resolved, returnees will most likely seek safety in the overcrowded

⁵² Please refer to Update of January 2003, page 18.

⁵³ See footnote 51

⁵⁴ As an example, organised return to Dy Korriku/Sitinica in south Mitrovica of six Ashkaelia families displaced in IDP camps in north Mitrovica took place mid-December 2003. Yet, many houses in the area remain ruined or are still occupied by Kosovo Albanian IDPs. Kosovo Albanian IDPs are mostly displaced from Stari Trg/Sheshi Vjeter and Prvi Tunel/Tuneli Pare, the suburbs of south Mitrovice/a

⁵⁵ The first phase of the return phase, development of an urban plan is planned for early 2004.

northern collective centres - attested by the above mentioned arrivals of IDPs in Kablar barracks - or in secondary displacement in Serbia⁵⁶.

A. 6. Concluding observations

As emphasised more in detail for specific locations in the regional chapters above, any unplanned large-scale returns would disrupt the current minority return process and any forced returns to areas or locations completely emptied or void of any minority members could lead to security problems and secondary displacement, mostly to the current overcrowded settlements and neighbourhoods inside Kosovo, Serbia and Montenegro or FYROM. In addition to security risks the returnees may face, many would be confronted with intractable problems of destroyed houses, illegally occupied properties or property ownership issues, particularly in urban areas. Moreover, the fragile tolerance already achieved with the majority communities in many locations may easily be disrupted by the additional returnee, who is not even originating from the location concerned.

B. Kosovo Serbs

Kosovo Serbs remained the primary targets of inter-ethnic violence throughout Kosovo. Severe security incidents often had a destabilizing effect in the affected area or region and easily tipped the crucial balance as they often create a period of unrest by triggering off (smaller) "counter-offences" aggravating the sense of insecurity among the respective communities. Sometimes they led to departures from the affected village or region, or, resulted in return-related activities in the area being put on hold.

The following **chronology** of major security incidents involving Kosovo Serb victims and subsequent developments illustrates the heightened sense of insecurity:

On 11 February 2003, two persons forcibly entered a Kosovo Serb house in Devet Jugovica, Prishtine/Pristina North Village, severely beat a 65 year-old Kosovo Serb, shot her twice in the leg and fled. Her son had already left for Serbia 18 months earlier, having been beaten. The attack on the single woman revived the feeling of insecurity and four neighbouring families immediately left for Serbia.

After several incidents in the mixed village of Mogila⁵⁷, tensions were high in Viti/na municipality, Gjilan/ Gnjilane region, in spring 2003.

⁵⁶ Of those forced returnees monitored by UNHCR in the region, one Ashkaelia and two Egyptian families immediately left Kosovo for Serbia. One Ashkaelia deportee moved into secondary displacement as his own house is completely destroyed.

⁵⁷ Following a grenade attack against a Kosovo Serb-owned bar in the ethnically mixed village of Mogila, Viti/na municipality, on 07 February 2003, four Kosovo Serb males sustained injuries. On 22 February 2003, a Serb-owned shop in the same village got 16 bullets from an automatic weapon, fired by unknown person(s), leaving a Serb injured. KFOR then established two checkpoints around the village. A month later, a group of Albanian youth, lead by the person arrested but subsequently released for the grenade attack above, created public disorder and stoned vehicles with Serb passengers, in full view of a KFOR checkpoint. A Serb male was hit by a stone.

In Obilic/q, Prishtine/Pristina region, unknown person(s) murdered an 80-year-old Kosovo Serb, his 78-year-old wife and their 53-year-old son before setting their house and car on fire on 04 June 2003.⁵⁸ In Skulanevo village, one of the four mono-ethnic Serb villages in Lip(l)jan municipality, allegedly two known Kosovo Albanians from a nearby village shot and killed a Kosovo Serb male on 11 August 2003.⁵⁹

On 13 August 2003, several unidentified gunmen opened fire from automatic weapons at a group of Kosovo Serbian youth bathing in a stream near the village of Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, Peje/Pec municipality. One 19-year-old male was killed on the spot, one 12 year-old boy died on the way to the hospital and four other juveniles were hospitalized.⁶⁰ On 26 August 2003, unknown person(s) shot and seriously injured a Kosovo Serb male in the village of Binxhe/Bica, Kline/a municipality⁶¹.

On 31 August 2003, a bomb attack in the Serb part of the ethnically mixed village of Cernica, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, killed one and injured four Kosovo Serb men. Within seconds, another incident occurred 300m from the first one, causing no casualties. Two hand grenades thrown from a car caused the explosions. After this, four families left the village in fear. On 04 October 2003, a Kosovo Albanian shot and killed a 75-year-old Kosovo Serb woman attempting to visit her house, illegally occupied by the Kosovo Albanian's family, in Gjilan/ Gnjilane town.

On 28 November 2003, a group of 26 Kosovo Serbs intending to return to Kline/Klina town had arrived to Binxhe/Bica on a KFOR escorted bus. Two weeks later, a Kosovo Albanian crowd attacked the group of Kosovo Serbs thus preventing the first attempted return to urban area of Kline/Klina town in Pejë/Pec region. Since this attempt to return to the town failed, the group has since remained in secondary displacement in Binxhe/Bica. In January and February 2004, an additional 20 IDPs joined the group.

A 70 year old Kosovo Serb male was assaulted by six persons in Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, put in a bag and thrown into a river on 08 November 2003. The victim was hospitalised with head injuries.

On 10 January 2004, a Kosovo Serb male was injured in a drive-by shooting in Novo Naselje, Lip(l)jan Municipality which provoked protests and violent confrontations between Kosovo Serbs and Kosovo Albanians in the neighbouring villages. Also in Lip(l)jan Municipality, a Kosovo

⁵⁸ The victims were one of only two Serb households remaining in that part of town after the conflict, well known and accepted by their neighbours. About 60 Serbs protested in front of the house to stress the lack of security. As a result, several return related initiatives were temporarily put on hold. Priority was given to stabilising the remaining Serb population. Although many families contemplated leaving, only two elderly couples departed for Serbia. KFOR increased its patrols.

⁵⁹ One week before the killing, the victim had found two hand grenades in his hay bale. Two other Kosovo Serbs had also encountered harassment from Kosovo Albanians while fishing in the river that divides the Serbian village from the Albanian villages.

⁶⁰ Subsequently, heavy movement restrictions were enforced for weeks, prohibiting Kosovo Albanians access to the village. In the following days, small scale incidents targeting Kosovo Albanians, believed to be acts of revenge, took place throughout Kosovo, especially in Mitrovice/a North.

⁶¹ The case is under investigation. The resident community heavily opposed the victim's return from Serbia in April 2003, as a relative of his is believed to have committed war crimes. Shortly before the incident the victim reportedly was seen drinking and speaking about his good contacts with Kosovo Albanians. It cannot be excluded that the perpetrator(s) is/are Kosovo Serb(s). Following the incident, Kosovo Serbs held protests, blocking roads. The area remains heavily guarded as KFOR moved its main base from Kline/a town to the village.

Serb male and female were found dead with gunshot wounds inside a vehicle parked on a road in an ethnically mixed area on 19 February 2004.

Apart from these most severe incidents, Serbs were often victims of physical assaults and attacks against their property, such as arson or use of explosives. Small scale incidents hindering the exercise of freedom of movement occurred continuously: Albanian children reportedly threw stones at passing vehicles with Serb drivers or passengers in Suvi Do, Mitrovice/a municipality. Rock throwing at cars with Yugoslav license plates was also repeatedly reported in Koretin, Kamenice/a municipality. The UNMIK provided shuttle between Rahovec/ Orahovac, Prizren region and Zvecan, Mitrovice/a region, experienced rock throwing on five occasions during 2003, all when passing through Malishevo municipality. During the month of June 2003, an increasing trend of pelting stones on Kosovo Serbian owned houses and at pedestrians was noted. Numerous stone throwing incidents go unreported, as do low level harassment.

Confidence towards law enforcement authorities seems to have increased until the March riots, possibly as a result of ethnically mixed police patrols. However, the low rate of solved crimes increased frustrations. Only in the case of the above woman killed in Gjilan/Gnjilane town has the police arrested a suspect and referred the case to the public prosecutor. The investigation into the shooting of the Kosovo Serb on 11 February 2003 in Prishtine/Pristina region is inactive⁶². All other above cases are under investigation. Nor do the Serbs feel that the police would be more effective in solving minor incidents. A case in point: In Svinjare/Fraser, Mitrovice/a municipality, theft of livestock, particularly cows, and farming machinery belonging to Serb inhabitants of the village entirely surrounded by Albanian villages, was common place and regularly reported to the police. No arrests and no cessation of the thefts have been achieved so far.⁶³ Affected by this precarious security situation, **freedom of movement** was still very limited for Kosovo Serbs, even before March 2004.

B. 1. Prishtine/Pristina region

The overall security situation of the Serb communities in Prishtine/Pristina region remained unstable particularly after the gruesome triple killings of the Serb family in Obiliq/c in June 2003. A sense of insecurity among Kosovo Serb communities persisted, due to disruption of a seemingly quiet period with this series of violent acts against their community within and outside the region. Despite security concerns, the exercise of freedom of movement slightly improved in the region. UNHCR's returnee monitoring revealed that some of the returnees even travelled throughout Kosovo, whenever there was a need to do so, but using mono-ethnic transport arrangements. In contrast, there were also returnees who did not move around even in their villages, fearing similar ethnically motivated crimes. Moreover, many Serb families were afraid to access their agricultural land, particularly when situated far away from their house/village and too close to the majority community.⁶⁴

⁶² A case is "inactive" when there is not enough evidence to continue the investigation, but the case will be opened again if relevant information appears.

⁶³ The Serb population of Svinjare/Fraser was later forcibly driven out by the rioting crowds of March 2004 and their property destroyed. Similar livestock thefts took place frequently in Kamenica, Novo Brdo and Gjilan/Gnjilane municipalities, all in Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Many were reported, but few were solved.

⁶⁴ In the mixed village of Rabovce in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality where Serbs and Albanians live side by side, Serbs were provided with KFOR escort when accessing their agricultural land. In the village of Staro Gracko, also Lipjan/Lipljan municipality, some villagers accessed and cultivated land situated within the vicinity of the village, while land located near the Albanian villages were uncultivated. In the village of

The majority of the Serb returns to the region occurred spontaneously, to rural mono-ethnic areas or enclaves; only 10% of the returns took place to urban areas.⁶⁵ Prishtine/Pristina municipality received the most returnees, mainly to Gracanica, Caglavica and Laplje Selo.⁶⁶ No returns of Serbs took place to locations or areas void of the minority population.

B.2. Gjiilan/Gnjilane region

The previously positive indications of growing confidence in a future in Kosovo, which had resulted in rising numbers of minority returns to Gjiilan/Gnjilane region was disrupted by a series of violent incidents targeting Kosovo Serbs in summer of 2003 in Obiliq/c, Gorazdevac and Cernica. Although two of the three mentioned incidents occurred outside the region, they reverberated instantly. These ethnically motivated incidents not only adversely impacted on the pace of return, but also dampened the perception of the resident communities, particularly in the southern part of Gjiilan/Gnjilane region, reinforcing pessimism toward a future in Kosovo. Consequently, in October 2003, UNHCR detected an increased number of minority departures for the first time since the year 2000.

Serbs from Gjiilan/Gnjilane region extended their freedom of movement beyond their municipality, with the exception of few housebound Serbs in Ferizaj/Urosevac. Even the Serbs from Shterpce/Strpce, who had been rather isolated in previous years, travelled to Serbia, to Gjiilan/Gnjilane, to FYROM and other destinations.

The reduction of escorts provided to minority communities continued in 2003 and the first months of 2004. By year end 2003, neither KFOR nor UNMIK Police were providing escorts on an individual basis. UNMIK provided 'unescorted' school transport. KPS provided the only escort available to Serb school children in Cernica. KFOR ceased escort for convoys to Serbia via Merdare (Podujevo municipality) boundary crossing by 16 January 2004 and KPS increased their engagement accordingly. Escorts in Shterpce/Strpce were discontinued as of 13 February 2004 and the shuttle connecting Shterpce/Strpce and Prizren operated without major incidents. This all contributed to an environment where more Serbs travelled within the region. Consequently, the number of incidents, such as stoning when travelling in vehicles with Serbian registration, increased particularly in the northern part of the region. Serbs travelling with Kosovo (KS) registration did not face such incidents. Intimidation and harassment by the majority community continued and often went unreported. The rise in confidence amongst the Serb communities could be attributed to many factors, including the fact that security incidents related to freedom of movement did not result in deaths, as well as increased KPS vigilance and the resolution of certain cases of stoning, especially in Gjiilan/Gnjilane and Kamenica municipalities.

The Serb population in urban areas remained in a precarious situation. In Gjiilan/ Gnjilane town the Serb community decreased from 1,300 in 2000 to less than 200 in 2003. Many Serbs decided to sell their properties and leave permanently; they cited economic difficulties compounded by

Babin Most in Obiliq/c municipality, Serb families faced a similar problem as those in villages in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality. The Serbs in these three villages cultivated approximately 60% of the land located near their villages, while they refused to access the land situated near the main road or neighbouring Albanian villages unless escorted.

⁶⁵ A total of 146 Kosovo Serb families/470 persons returned to Prishtine/Pristina region during 2003, both to rural and urban areas.

⁶⁶ 53 families/181 individuals returned to Prishtine/Pristina municipality.

insecurity and restricted freedom of movement as determinant factors for their departure. This trend appeared irreversible as the Serb population in urban areas has lost the critical mass necessary to sustain the disadvantaged community in the economically depressed environment of Kosovo.

The vast majority of Serb returns continued to rural areas.⁶⁷ Despite the volatility of the overall security situation and heightened sense of vulnerability, the organised return processes opened a dialogue in a few 'difficult locations' completely void of minority residents.⁶⁸

B.3. Prizren region

The situation of Serb communities in Prizren region was an exception to the general observation made over the security situation of Serbs in Kosovo. Apart from an attempt to set three Serb houses on fire in Rahovec/Orahovac and the throwing of a Molotov cocktail into one of them on 22 December 2003, no serious security incidents targeting Serbs were reported from this region during the period covered. An increasing number of Serbs used the UNHCR-funded shuttles connecting Prizren town, Zhupa valley, and Shterpce/Strpce municipality, Gjilan/Gnjilane region. Many expressed their frustrations about not being able to move freely throughout Kosovo. Some of the returnees stayed in their villages, while some exercised freedom of movement within the municipality. None travelled Kosovo-wide.

The first organised Serb return to the region took place to the completely abandoned mono-ethnic village of Novake located in Prizren municipality in March 2003. The return was possible through a concerted effort by various actors, including the municipal authorities, and the acceptance by the receiving Albanian neighbours.⁶⁹ Various elements, including improved security situation, the availability of reconstruction assistance and pro-active cross-boundary activities of NGOs contributed to the realisation of the return. The returnees work on their land in the village and travel to Prizren town and to Serbia with the shuttles.

B.4. Peje/Pec region

Kosovo Serbs in Peje/Pec region continued to experience frequent attacks, including the aforementioned killings of children bathing in a stream in Gorazhdec/Gorazdevac in August 2003.

Nearly all Serbs in the region lived in mono ethnic villages with 24 hours KFOR guard. Their freedom of movement was severely curtailed. They mostly relied on KFOR protection to leave their villages. In line with its "unfixing strategy", KFOR no longer provided individual escorts but focused on securing roads by increased patrolling. An exception is provided by Bica/Binxhe and Grabac/Grabac villages in Kline/a municipality, where less stringent security measures, i.e. static presence, were installed at the outset of the return but later replaced by a small base, rendering the same Serb returnees heavily protected by KFOR⁷⁰. In Peje/Pec municipality, KFOR controlled movements in and out of Gorazhdec/Gorazdevac around the clock and patrolled ubiquitously around Belo Polje/Bellopoje. In Istog/k municipality, where the first organised Serb

⁶⁷ With the exception of one return to Gjilan/Gnjilane town; two to Viti/na; and one to Kamenica

⁶⁸ A mixed Serb and Albanian return was in process to Podgorce, Viti/na municipality, and to Babljak, Ferizaj/Urosevac municipality.

⁶⁹ This return process begun in summer of 2002.

⁷⁰ The KFOR move to Bica/Binxhe is also linked to consolidation of smaller bases in Kline/a municipality.

return to Osojan/e took place in 2001 with heavy security measures to ensure protection, KFOR disbanded fixed checkpoints in Osojan/e and decreased its presence in the nearby villages of Cerkozle/Crkolez and Suhogerle/Suvo Grlo. While KFOR's security measures reflected objective security conditions, they also revealed the subjective fear of the Serb community. Although many Serbs claimed that these arrangements were not sufficient, some Serbs from Istog/k municipality travelled in their private cars to nearby majority Serb municipalities in Mitrovice/a region. Serbs were willing to register their vehicles with Kosovo plates, but the need for double vehicle insurance for cars already insured outside Kosovo financially prevented many from registering. Nonetheless, the Kosovo Serb community in Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec increased their level of freedom of movement after registering their vehicles with Kosovo plates⁷¹. Most 'enclaves' in the region were connected to Mitrovice/a through a shuttle.

Access to public services remained restricted and cumbersome, mainly impacted by the security situation and correlative freedom of movement. In addition, strong inclination and support towards the existing parallel structures among the majority of Kosovo Serb returnees led, in some cases, to open rejection of services being offered⁷². Serb communities in small villages travelled to the nearby larger Serb villages or 'enclaves' to access basic services, relying on the services provided by the parallel structures. Needless to say, this perpetuated the dependence of Kosovo Serbs to Belgrade government and prevented integration into the majority communities.

The majority of the Serb returns took place to mono-ethnic rural areas in only three municipalities: Peje/Pec; Istog/k and Kline/a.⁷³ Overall living conditions of Serb returnees were comparatively better than for other ethnic minority returnees, as almost all Serb returns took place in an organised manner with multi-sectoral return assistance.

B.5. Mitrovice/a region

In addition to the northern municipalities, Kosovo Serbs in Mitrovice/a region mainly live in the mono-ethnic villages in Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality⁷⁴ and in ethnically mixed villages in Mitrovice/a⁷⁵ and Skenderaj/Srbica municipalities⁷⁶. Their freedom of movement was still limited as they relied on escorts or KFOR/Civil Police protected trains to leave the villages. As of 31 January 2004, KFOR Permanent Presence in Priluzje/Prilluzhë was replaced by UN Civil Police, KPS and KFOR area patrols. As of 01 February 2004, KFOR ceased escort for the humanitarian bus line, while a Quick Reaction Force was ready to intervene on call. The fixed checkpoint in the small village of Miroc/e, Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality, where four K/S families and one K/A family live was removed in February 2004. In addition, KFOR planned to gradually remove its permanent military presence from religious sites.

⁷¹ UNHCR is aware of a group of workers from Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec employed in the reconstruction of houses in Belo Polje/Bellopoje, who frequently used their own vehicles to reach the construction site without KFOR escort

⁷² In 2003, Kosovo institutions offered basic services (e.g. vaccination, primary health, elementary schooling) to Kosovo Serbs in Binxha/Bica and Grabac/Grabc, but the local Kosovo Serb communities felt more comfortable relying on services provided by parallel structures

⁷³ Belo Polje/Bellopoje, situated in a semi-urban area, was the exception. Out of the three municipalities, Kline/a received the highest number of Serb returnees.

⁷⁴ Grace, Gojbula and Priluzje villages. The villages of Pantine/Pantina, Pestove/Pestovo, Vrnice/Vrnica, and Novolan/Nevojliane in Vushtrri/Vucitrn remain void of their former Serb inhabitants.

⁷⁵ Svinjare/Fraser village. Serb families allegedly have sold their properties in urban Mitrovice/a south.

⁷⁶ Banje/Baje and Suvo Grlo/Surigane

Most Serb returns occurred spontaneously to these areas. Education and basic health services were provided by Serbian structures in the villages, except for secondary, tertiary health care and specialised intervention which were available in north Mitrovice/a or Serbia.

The returnees in Svinjare/Frasher village in Mitrovice/a were concerned over continuous theft of livestock and agricultural machinery. The communities reported all incidents to the police but found the police ineffective as the thefts do not subside. Reports of sporadic departures ensued due to extreme economic difficulties compounded by limited freedom of movement.

Notwithstanding the opposition of the majority community, the first organised return of Serbs to the village of Novo Selo/Maxhunj in Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality was underway. While war crimes were cited, the main reason behind the opposition by a small group of Albanians was connected to their economic interest as they occupied and cultivated land owned by Serbs.

B.6. Concluding observations

In contrast to the improvements in terms of security, freedom of movement and subsequent access to basic rights and services for minority communities in Kosovo in general during the reporting period, the series of violent crimes of which the Serb minority members have been victims does rather indicate a deterioration in their security situation.

From the above described precarious security situation Kosovo-wide, combined with the fact that only a few organised and no spontaneous returns have taken place to areas previously void of their minority population, it becomes clear that any forced return of Serbs could place their lives in danger and would lead to secondary displacement to mono-ethnic locations. Although Serb communities in Prizren region have seen a steady improvement in their security situation as compared to other regions in Kosovo, the overall situation of Kosovo Serbs even in this region was still characterised as unstable. A seemingly eased tension and relaxed inter-ethnic relation could erupt and manifest the prevailing intolerance (particularly) towards Serb returns by the Albanian communities as attested by the violent opposition to the Go-and-See-Visit of Serb IDPs by the majority communities in Musutiste/Mushtisht in November 2003.

C. Kosovo Bosniaks

As in the previous reporting period, the **security situation** of Kosovo Bosniaks, especially in Prizren region where the vast majority of the community lives, remained stable with no major ethnically motivated incidents. However, there were still sporadic incidents involving Bosniak victims, especially when exercising freedom of movement. A minivan with Serbian registration plates, which is regularly operated by a Kosovo Bosniak between Kosovo and Serbia was shot at three to four times on 23 June 2003 in Prizren municipality; the van was transporting four Kosovo Bosniaks, one Kosovo Gorani and three Kosovo Albanians, one of whom was slightly wounded. On 06 June 2003, a Kosovo Albanian was arrested for assaulting a Kosovo Bosniak with a metal bar in Istok/g municipality, Peje/Pec region: the victim was hospitalized with serious injuries. A hand grenade was thrown onto the roof of a Bosniak house under reconstruction in the Bosniak

Mahalla, an ethnically mixed area in Mitrovice/a North on 13 August 2003⁷⁷. Unlike 2002, no new incidents were reported of Kosovo Bosniaks being taken to the police for speaking their language in public. Nevertheless, the ability to speak Albanian remained a determinant factor for the sense of security and for the level of freedom of movement exercised by an individual.

Compared to other minority communities, Kosovo Bosniaks had greater trust in the police forces, possibly as many feel that their community is adequately represented within the Kosovo Police Service as well as within the Kosovo Protection Corps. Subsequently, Bosniaks reported security incidents to the police although traditional mediation was also practised.⁷⁸

In some areas, this stability has been achieved partly through Bosniak political engagement at the central and local levels as well as participation in municipal structures. This is the case in Peje/Pec, Prizren, and Dragash municipalities, while the Bosniak communities continue to be marginalised in Prishtine/Pristina municipality.⁷⁹

Following the progress made in 2002 with the launch of a Business faculty in Bosniak language in Peje/Pec, a Teacher College opened in Prizren providing more opportunities for higher education⁸⁰. The establishment of these institutions had a positive impact on the community as a whole and may slow down the trend of departures. There is adequate access to primary and secondary education, with many students attending mixed school with the Kosovo Albanian children, but with a separate curriculum.

Despite relaxation of inter-ethnic relations, Bosniaks informed that they did not sense a significant change in their overall situation in Kosovo. The communities invariably continued to raise concerns over lack of economic opportunity and discrimination in accessing public and private sector employment. Bosniak families continued to sell their properties in Peje/Pec and Prizren regions and depart for Bosnia-Herzegovina or Western Europe. The improvement in security and freedom of movement could not stave off departures, which are mainly due to perceived lack of future prospects in Kosovo.

C.1. Prishtine/Pristina region

In Prishtine/Pristina region, where a small Bosniak community lives rather isolated⁸¹, the overall situation of Bosniaks remained stagnant since the last Update.⁸² Members of the Bosniak

⁷⁷ Another killing in Leposavic municipality, Mitrovice/a region was revealed not to be ethnically motivated, but rather, according to the police, a dispute over truck ownership among Bosniaks.

⁷⁸ On 10 May 2003 three drunken Kosovo Serb juveniles threatened to destroy a Kosovo Gorani and a Kosovo Bosniak owned shop in Zvecan, Mitrovice/a region, unless the owners pay them 3,000 euro. Kosovo Serb neighbours informed the police. The parents of the perpetrators, known customers in both shops, apologized to the victims and offered to pay money. The victims were not interested in further police investigations as they feared future problems with the perpetrators. Nonetheless, the police arrested the perpetrators who were subsequently released by the court after a warning.

⁷⁹ The Bosniak communities are represented as deputy municipal presidents as well as in the municipal executive boards in the three first mentioned municipalities. There are two Bosniak judges in the judiciary in Peje/Pec. In Prizren and Peje/Pec, the Bosniak political parties were a deciding factor for the formation of the local or municipal government through coalition with Albanian political parties.

⁸⁰ The establishment of a Bosniak language department at Prishtine/Pristina University has also been suggested.

⁸¹ It is speculated that there are only four to five families remaining in urban Prishtine/Pristina. Most of these remaining Bosniaks have a close link with the Albanian communities, e.g. mixed marriages.

population were no longer a target of attacks or violence emanating from the majority community and they had relative freedom of movement although their mobility continued to be dictated by their ability to converse in Albanian. The use of Bosniak language in public was still limited. Many Kosovo Bosniak business premises and apartments are still illegally occupied by Kosovo Albanians. So as not to generate tensions with the occupants, most Bosniaks did not initiate legal procedures for repossession of their property. Bosniak children including those from Mazgit had access to primary and secondary schools in Prishtine/Pristina.

Notwithstanding, there were no Bosniak returns to the region. Instead the community continued to experience more departures after property transactions and relocation to Bosnia-Herzegovina or Sandzak. Unlike the communities in Peje/Pec and Prizren regions, the Bosniak communities in this region have lost the critical mass in the recent period to anchor their community, making it extremely difficult to return to the pre-war conditions. Moreover, the Bosniak leadership in Prishtine/Pristina municipality failed to have a significant political platform to have their voice heard and to normalise the situation.

C.2. Prizren region

In Prizren region, Kosovo Bosniaks enjoyed freedom of movement within the Zhupa valley, Podgor area and Prizren town - where the majority of the Bosniak returns in the region took place -, but were reluctant to venture further because of the language barrier. During the reporting period, a total of 275 Bosniaks returned to Prizren region⁸³ and most returned to their places or villages of origin, to mixed or mono-ethnic villages or rural areas. The majority of the returnees did not report any security incidents or immediate concerns upon arrival, with a few exceptions.⁸⁴ Overcrowded accommodation has increasingly become a major concern. There were notable sales of Bosniak properties in Prizren town and Podgor area with a clear intent to permanently move and relocate to Bosnia-Herzegovina. Unemployment was cited as a major problem confronted by the Bosniak communities, exacerbated by discrimination in the employment in the public sector and by their inability to speak Albanian.

C.3. Peje/Pec region

In Peje/Pec region, the ability to speak Albanian continued to influence the mobility of Bosniaks encouraging or discouraging them to move beyond the immediate environs. As a manifestation of an increase in overall confidence, some were beginning to exercise more freedom of movement even if they were deficient in the majority language. In Peje/Pec municipality, Bosniaks from surrounding neighbourhoods travelled to the town for trading without difficulty. The use of public transportation and travel to other areas outside the region, including Prishtine/Pristina town, continued to increase. Although freedom of movement clearly improved in terms of Bosniak

⁸² They are found mainly in urban Prishtine/Pristina and the village of Mazgit in Obiliq/c municipality

⁸³ This includes UNHCR monitored returns from Western Europe, of which 97 returned voluntarily and 102 involuntarily.

⁸⁴ An example of the exceptions is the returnee originating from suburban Prizren, who was forced to relocate to his parents upon return. He claims being exposed to constant intimidation and verbal harassment by his Albanian neighbours. He had served in the Yugoslav army and thus is seen as a collaborator. The person had fled Kosovo due to economic reasons and pressure from the Albanian neighbourhood. The returnee travels to Prizren town as his background is unknown there, but he feels unsafe in his old neighbourhood.

minority travel, the range of their mobility remained mostly within the region and fostering links with Montenegro rather than other parts of Kosovo.

The Bosniak community did not report discrimination in accessing public services, but complained about problems related to issuance of official documents in their language. A high number of Bosniak families (43) departed Kosovo, representing 46 per cent of the total number of UNHCR recorded departures in the region.

C.4. Mitrovice/a region

In Mitrovice/a region, no further security incidents targeting Bosniaks were reported. In the urban Albanian-dominated south Mitrovice/a, Bosniaks were starting to speak their mother tongue when visiting municipal buildings and services although Bosniak being spoken in the streets was rarely heard, particularly in the south. There was a slight improvement in freedom of movement, notably as Bosniaks in the north started to travel to the south in private vehicles. Bosniaks both in the south and the north accessed basic services without any impediments. Bosniak children on both sides of the river continued to access education on their 'side'.

Nevertheless, the overall situation of Bosniak communities in Mitrovice/a region could not be considered as stable as they continued to feel vulnerable in the tense and unpredictable environment, influenced by the particular political situation in that region. Some Bosniaks in north Mitrovice/a sold their properties and departed Kosovo. To further attest the precarious situation of Bosniaks, several returns, whether forced or voluntary also resulted in secondary displacement.

C.5. Concluding observations

Large scale returns of Bosniaks may not necessarily result in secondary displacement, but will further create economic constraints faced by the communities. Particularly those who had already sold their properties in Kosovo would encounter serious problems to find shelter and would press the hosting capacity of the community. Forced returns to Prizren town could result in relocation to villages or rural areas where the communities are concentrated.

Considering the prevailing situation of Mitrovice/a region, voluntary return of Bosniaks is unlikely; many would depart immediately and go into secondary displacement to places such as Bosnia-Herzegovina and Serbia. All of the forced returns from Western Europe to that region during the period under review resulted in secondary displacement and immediate departure from Kosovo.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ One family was reported as gone to Bosnia-Herzegovina; a second went immediately to Novi Pazar, Serbia; a third originating from the Bosniak Mahala situated in north Mitrovice/a relocated to Serbia proper; and a fourth could not be located. The third one had sold their property prior to their departure in 2002.

D. Kosovo Gorani

D.1. Prizren region

The overall **security situation** of the Gorani, who are predominantly concentrated in the isolated and underdeveloped southernmost municipality of Dragash/Dragas, remained stable. With the exception of one stoning incident against a Gorani-operated bus in May 2003, no ethnically motivated incidents involving Gorani were reported. The local population, both Gorani and Albanian, continued to be exposed to insecurity arising from infiltration of criminal elements from Albania and were subjected to robberies and violence⁸⁶.

The level of **freedom of movement** was affected by their command of the Albanian language, rather than by the actual security situation. While Kosovo Gorani exercised unlimited freedom of movement in the Gora region, the majority of the community was still reluctant to move beyond Prizren town. Notwithstanding, increased use of public transport to other parts of Kosovo and use of their own transport arrangements to travel beyond the region, mainly to Serbia, was noted.⁸⁷

No discrimination and harassment when accessing public services were reported but the majority of the Gorani who were previously employed in the public sector, including the majority of medical doctors, remained without jobs. Hence Gorani still travelled to Serbia for tertiary medical care or specialised intervention. Gorani children attended primary schools mostly at the village level and commuted to Dragash town for secondary education. Gorani students went mainly to Serbia, Montenegro, North Mitrovice/a or to the recently established schools in Peje/Pec and Prizren for higher education.

Although the tension between Gorani and majority Albanian communities eased in recent years, Gorani were not interested in integrating nor interacting with the majority community, except for commercial purposes. The refusal by Gorani children to attend grade 9th in the new Kosovo curriculum is a case in point; approximately 37 children reportedly left for Serbia to continue their education. Uncertainty about the Kosovo final status and lack of prospects continued to negatively influence their integration. Community leaders maintained that they were well represented in the municipal structures proportionate to their population, including in the decision-making process.

With the exception of returns to mixed areas in Dragash and Prizren towns, all returns took place to mono-ethnic villages.⁸⁸ The main reason prompting many to return was deteriorating living conditions in the place of displacement. These returns were, however, 'off-set' by continuous departures. Particularly Dragash municipality, plagued with a high rate of unemployment, reported Gorani families selling their properties and leaving for Serbia. Paradoxically, those who have returned to Kosovo from Serbia-Montenegro have claimed deteriorating living conditions for their return to Kosovo. Neighbours or family members of deportees, whom UNHCR could not locate indicated mostly economic hardship for the renewed departure of recent returnees. But

⁸⁶ The killing of a Gorani by unknown masked persons at his home in Donj Krstec, Prizren region on 31 December 2002, was determined not to be ethnically motivated but related to the general insecurity and criminality in the border area. There is a continuous effort by the Municipality and the police to tackle this problem through various measures including establishing police posts in isolated villages and areas and frequent border co-ordination with the Albanian Police.

⁸⁷ The regular Gorani run transport from Dragash to Nis has continued, despite the stoning incident.

⁸⁸ There were 131 returns of Gorani, mostly to Dragash municipality, 49 of which were spontaneous or facilitated under BPRM programme from Serbia and Montenegro and from FYROM.

some also indicated a combination of economic and security reasons, particularly for those who were reportedly engaged closely with the military and police during the previous regime.

D.2. Concluding observations

Without sustainable economic investments for job creation and development efforts targeted at the virtually non-existent local economy of Dragash municipality, large scale returns would continue to exacerbate the situation and would immediately result in departure of many returnees searching for better economic opportunity elsewhere. Increasing frustration within the community compounded by large-scale forced returns cannot be ignored and may lead to a social tension.

E. Albanian ethnic minority

Kosovo Albanians constitute an ethnic minority in the northern municipalities and urban Mitrovica/a North, as well as in Shterpe/Strpe municipality. Whereas the security situation in urban Mitrovica/a North remained volatile, Albanians were also sporadically targeted in Shterpe/Strpe and the northern municipalities.

E.1. Mitrovica/a region

The following non-exhaustive list of **security incidents** in Mitrovica/a region, some linked to **freedom of movement**, illustrates the point of Kosovo Albanians being directly targeted as well as the inadequate response by the law enforcement authorities:

On 11 February 2003, a group of 30 Kosovo Serbs physically ill-treated a Kosovo Albanian family driving in Zubin Potok municipality.⁸⁹ A 62 year old Albanian male from Bosniak Mahalla was attacked and brutally beaten by three Serb males on 05 May 2003 when trying to pass the road from Suvi Do to the main bridge. The victim, who stated he had been attacked several times before, sustained injuries and was hospitalized.⁹⁰ In the area of the Three Towers in Mitrovica/a North, an Albanian male was assaulted and injured by unknown Serb males on 20 August 2003. The incident was immediately reported to the police who only arrived on the spot three hours later.⁹¹ A series of physical assaults directed at Albanians in Mitrovica/a North was reported in the first half of December 2003, while Albanians faced personal stoning and stoning of their houses throughout the reporting period.

Since Kosovo Albanians living in the mono-ethnic villages of Koshtove/Kosutove, Bistrica e Shales/Salska Bistrica and Ceraj/Ceranja in Leposaviq/c Municipality are very isolated from the Serb population, they hardly faced any immediate security threats. Their freedom of movement was however very limited as they did not access Serb areas and approached public services such as health care and education in the South, using different roads to reach South Mitrovica/a. This much limited freedom of movement severely impacted on their economic possibilities.

⁸⁹ The family was on its way to the Albanian village Cabra and had accidentally driven into a Serb area. They were immediately approached by the group of Kosovo Serbs who physically assaulted them. The driver sustained minor injuries and damages to the car before they managed to escape. The police have closed the case because "the victim is not interested to co-operate with the police".

⁹⁰ During the last four years, 12 grenades were allegedly thrown at his house.

⁹¹ The incident may have been an act of revenge on the deadly shooting of Serb youngsters in Peje/Pec region one week earlier.

Some voluntary returns took place mostly to these mono-ethnic villages, with the exception of one elderly couple who voluntarily repatriated to their home in Bosniak Mahala in fear of their house being illegally occupied. The majority of the Albanian population originating from Leposavic/q were still displaced in south Mitrovice/a. The curtailed freedom of movement in the north and subsequent lack of employment prevented most of their returns to the northern municipalities⁹². Those who own agricultural land situated near the Kosovo Serb areas or adjacent to the main road did not dare to access their farmland.

Several of the Kosovo Albanians, who were deported to Kosovo from Western European countries were unable to return to their place of origin in the north and are currently displaced in south Mitrovice/a. Only a few, who originate from the Albanian dominated areas or mixed areas north of the Ibar river managed to return to their place of origin⁹³. Some allegedly have already departed again to Western Europe. Freedom of movement of those who returned and originate from the mixed areas or from the Albanian dominated locations in north was curtailed; they were exposed to sporadic security incidents in the politically tense and divided urban Mitrovice/a.

E.2. Shtërpçë/Strpce municipality

In Shtërpçë/Strpce municipality, the reporting period saw the very difficult spontaneous return to the remaining village void of its minority community. This return to Biti-e-Epermi/Gonja Bitinja was initially resisted by the majority Serb municipality and particularly its neighbouring village. After the actual return, no security incidents have been reported, nor were the inhabitants threatened in revenge during the civil unrest in March 2004.

E.3. Concluding observations

In the prevailing politically tense environment, any forced return of Albanians originating from the urban north Mitrovice/a would result in secondary displacement. The frustration of Albanian IDPs in the south would continue to polarise the two divided communities - as experienced during the period under review, Albanian IDPs would increase their demand for return in exchange for returns (of Serbs) to the south. It may also further affect other minority return processes by enticing Albanian IDPs to illegally occupy houses of Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians as in Dy Korriku/Sitinica Naselje, Mitrovice/a municipality. Even in mixed or Albanian majority areas north of the Ibar River, where recent returns have taken place, any unplanned larger forced returns of Albanians would heighten tension in the surrounding Serb dominated environment.⁹⁴

In the mono-ethnic villages of Leposavic/q, Zubin Potok, and Zvecan, any unplanned and large-scale return movements of Albanians may result in a security risk. Moreover, their freedom of movement remains already limited making sustainable returns difficult. The same, with the exception of the limitation of movement, applies to Albanians originating from the Serb majority municipality of Shtërpçë/Strpce, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality.

⁹² Leposavic/q, Zubin Potok, Zvecan, and the north Mitrovice/a are here referred to as the northern municipalities.

⁹³ Bosniak Mahala and Kodra e Minatoreve/Mikronaselje

⁹⁴ Gushavc/Gusevac, Suhodoll I ulet/Donji Suvido, Vinarc/Vinarce, Vidimirq/Vidimiric and Cabra/Caber.

PART 3: SITUATION OF MINORITY GROUPS BY REGION IN LIGHT OF THE TURMOIL IN MARCH 2004

The gradual improvements to security, freedom of movement and access to basic services for members of minority communities in general, with the exception of the Serb minority community as mentioned above in Part 2, came to a drastic halt in mid-March 2004 with the sudden eruption of civil unrest, continuing for several days. The riots and inter-ethnic violence targeted particularly Kosovo Serbs, Roma and Ashkaelia communities, and was the most intense and wide-spread cycle of violence experienced since 1999.

The scale of the violence, combined with the lack of preparedness of, and difficulties faced by, the security agencies to curb the violence have had serious repercussions on the security, freedom of movement, and consequently access to basic rights and services. Therefore a separate analysis of the situation of the minority communities both during and after the civil unrest is warranted. The analysis covers the period up to 1 May 2004. The chapter closes with final conclusions of the situation of the ethnic minority communities, particularly that of Kosovo Serb, Roma, Ashkaelia, Egyptian, Bosniak and Gorani.

A. Inter-ethnic violence between 15 and 19 March 2004

A.1. Introduction

A series of severe security incidents commencing on 15 March 2004 sparked the Kosovo-wide inter-ethnic violence and civil unrest. The first identifiable incident in this cycle of violence involved the serious wounding of a 19 year old Kosovo Serb, in a drive-by shooting, on 15 March in the village of Caglavica/Cagllavice, Prishtine/Pristina municipality. This shooting should also be placed in a context where a few weeks before, two Kosovo Serbs were killed in similar circumstances in Lipjan/Lipljan, the neighbouring municipality⁹⁵. On 16 March 2004, the above provoked violent protests by ethnic Serbs who threw stones at KFOR troops and at UN police and who then proceeded to block the main road connecting Prishtine/Pristina to FYROM.

The same day, Kosovo media carried the story of three ethnic Albanian boys aged 9-12 who had drowned in a fast-moving river running through Mitrovice/a. According to a surviving boy, the children had been driven into the river while trying to escape from Serb youths who were chasing them with dogs.

Reacting to this incident Kosovo Albanians took to the streets in protest, starting in Mitrovice/a but quickly spanning out to mass demonstrations and violent clashes in all regions of Kosovo. Makeshift roadblocks were set up by Kosovo Albanians and Serbs, gunfire was exchanged and hand-grenades thrown, churches, houses, schools and other infrastructure were set on fire; larger groups of Albanians marched on minority enclaves and residential buildings in urban areas provoking panic and substantial displacement of minority groups within Kosovo.

Kosovo Serbs were the primary target of inter-ethnic violence. It is noteworthy that this targeted mainly resident minority communities that had never been displaced over the past five years

⁹⁵ See earlier reference to the killings on 19 February 2004, page 20.

although returnees also came under direct attack. Equally, various serious security incidents affected **Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian** communities. This particularly concerned the village of Vushtrii/Vucitrn, where an entire Ashkaelia neighbourhood was looted and burnt down, with KFOR evacuating the Ashkaelia community at the last moment to prevent serious injury or loss of life. Vushtrii/Vucitrn had been the focus of a small scale return effort in recent years benefiting a number of Ashkaelia families previously displaced in Serbia. Likewise, some Albanian communities and families in a minority situation in the north suffered various security incidents. Finally, whereas **Bosniaks and Gorani** did not become a direct target of the violence, in some locations they felt sufficiently at risk that they opted for precautionary movements, or were evacuated by police, to safer places. Three ethnic **Turkic** families (14 persons) also fled from Mitrovica/a North.

The widespread and systematic nature of the violence took Kosovo's civil and military authorities by surprise. As a result, during the first waves of attack, KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS struggled to maintain control. In many locations they failed to protect minorities, their property and municipal infrastructure, and were unable to prevent the large scale displacement of minority communities fearful for their lives. In some locations KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS intervened directly to assist in the emergency evacuation of minority groups; thereafter their houses, churches and schools were looted and burnt down by violent Albanian mobs. In other locations, KPS and the local majority population as well as local authorities actively prevented protestors from attacking Serb residents and their property. NATO troops were unable to stem the violence until the 20 March 2004 when some 2,000-men reinforcements were rushed to Kosovo.

The inter-ethnic violence of mid-March left 19 people killed (of whom 11 were Kosovo Albanians and 8 were Kosovo Serbs) while 954 civilians of various ethnicities were injured. In addition, 65 international police officers, 58 Kosovo Police Service (KPS) officers and 61 personnel of the Kosovo Force (KFOR) also suffered injuries.

Approximately 730 houses belonging to minorities, mostly Kosovo Serbs, were damaged or destroyed. In attacks on the cultural and religious heritage of Kosovo, 36 Orthodox churches, monasteries and other religious and cultural sites were also damaged or destroyed as was some UNMIK and KFOR property.

In less than 48 hours, 4,100 minority community members were displaced – which is quantitatively more than the total number of minorities who had returned to Kosovo throughout 2003 (3,664 persons). The majority of those newly displaced were in the Pristina/Pristina and southern Mitrovica/a regions, but displacement affected all other regions of Kosovo as well. Kosovo Serbs represented the highest number of newly displaced followed by Ashkaelia, Roma, Egyptians, Gorani and Bosniaks. Equally, some 350 Kosovo Albanians in areas where they constitute the minority were displaced from the northern section of Mitrovica/a. Among the IDPs, more than 1,000 found temporary refuge in various KFOR bases, while the rest were accommodated in public premises or with private host families. Some minority families have reportedly departed for Serbia/Montenegro or other destinations.

Whereas less than 8 per cent of the minorities targeted were returnees⁹⁶ – both voluntary and forced - the fact that resident minority communities who had never left before felt compelled to

⁹⁶ Pristina/Pristina region: 23 families (86 individuals); Mitrovica/e region: 62 families (221 individuals belonging to the ethnic groups of Ashkaelia and Serbs; 29 individuals were forced returnees) who returned since 2003 to Vushtrii/Vucitrn, Svinjare/Frasher and Pest; Prizren: 8 individuals; Gjiilan/Gnjilane: 1 individual

leave their homes for their security is in itself, a very disturbing factor and a most worrying development within Kosovo's present and possibly future, inter-ethnic relations. It is also most important to note that this concerns essentially minority communities living in ethnically mixed and urban areas rather than in mono-ethnic villages.

A.2. Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian

During the events, Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities had strong fears of becoming targeted on a systematic basis, in view of the violent attack on the Ashkaeli community in Vushtrri/Vucitrn on 18 March 2004 and various other serious security incidents affecting neighborhoods and individual families. In total, some 300 Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian were compelled to flee their homes and found refuge in KFOR camps, IDP collective centers or private host families. Other communities which were not targeted restricted their freedom of movement out of precaution. Confidence in law enforcement authorities further decreased amidst accusations that the police and KFOR did not provide adequate protection to the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptians and to their properties, in locations such as Vushtrri/Vucitrn.

In the **Prishtine/Pristina region**, in Lipjan/Lipljan, four houses belonging to Ashkaeli and Roma families were burnt to the ground on March 17 and March 21. In Obiliq/c a Roma family fled its home on March 17 and sought refuge in the nearby Plemetina/Plemetin refugee camp when they saw violent rioters approaching the neighborhood. A building which previously housed ethnic Serbs and Roma was looted and damaged. The Azotiku area in Obiliq/c where 19 Roma, Ashkaeli and Egyptian families live, was stoned by a group of youngsters. Fearing for its security the community stopped sending their children to school and going to Obliq/c town. In Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje a house occupied by one Ashkali family was burnt. Likewise, the only Roma/Ashkaelia/Egyptian owned shop in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje was burnt down. In Vranjevac, Prishtine/Pristina town, a group of youngsters stoned Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian houses while passing by to join the protestors downtown. In this case, KPS reacted immediately and protected the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian community against further harassment.

In the **Gjilan/Gnjilane region**, in Ferizaj/Urosevac one Ashkaeli was beaten. In Gjilan/Gnjilane town 65 Roma, mostly women, evacuated themselves to Bujanovac (Serbia) for precautionary reasons and returned to their homes some days later. The house of one Roma family was burnt during the unrest.

The worst incidents occurred in the **Mitrovica region**. In Vushtrri/Vucitrn a total of 67 houses belonging to Ashkaelia families were set on fire and destroyed on 18 March.⁹⁷ A crowd of 200-300 Albanians had gathered at the St. Elias Orthodox church in town, setting fire to the church and to the adjacent structures. At around the same time, a second crowd headed toward the Ashkaeli neighbourhood where they were joined by the first mentioned group. The crowd started breaking into the houses and some attackers reportedly tried to rape a girl. In all, 65 Ashkaelia families (251 persons), a few of them slightly injured, were evacuated by KPS officers and transferred to the French KFOR base in Maxhunaj/Novo Selo village where they remain to this day. The houses were subsequently looted and burned down. Only three Ashkaeli families remained in Vushtrri/Vucitrn. There are 58 returnee families (205 persons) among the evacuated families.

⁹⁷ This includes a few houses empty of their inhabitants.

In Dy Korriku/Sitnicko naselje, Mitrovice/a municipality four Kosovo Albanians assaulted an Ashkali who was slightly injured and hospitalized.

By contrast to the other regions, the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities of the **Prizren** and **Peje/Pec** regions were not directly affected by the inter-ethnic violence. Notwithstanding Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities limited their freedom of movement during the civil unrest and stayed within their minority areas.

A.3. Kosovo Serbs

Between 15 and 19 March 2004, Kosovo Serbs, their property as well as public, cultural and religious sites became the primary target of inter-ethnic violence. As mentioned above, the fact that resident minority communities who had not felt the need to move into displacement over the last five years were clearly targeted, is particularly noteworthy. The same also applies for various churches, monasteries and monuments which were not targeted in 1999. In many locations, confidence in KFOR, police, local authorities and majority population further decreased when violent crowds of Albanians were subsequently not prevented from looting and destroying Serb property. A total of more than 3,000 Serbs were forcibly displaced during the unrest. Some found refuge in KFOR camps, others were accommodated in collective centers or with private host families. In many locations Serbs relocated from ethnically mixed areas to mono-ethnic villages.

Whereas in some locations, KPS officers provided protection and assisted the victims, in other places, some KPS officers reportedly became accomplices by either participating in the riots or by not taking action to protect persons. Serbs have condemned the passive attitude of some Albanian KPS officers who were observing the violent events without taking action.⁹⁸ The evacuation of individual persons by KPS, albeit necessary for the preservation of life, was later perceived by the Serbs as demonstrating that there was no plan to protect them or their properties on site. Considering that much of the Serb's faith in the security systems rests on the participation of their own minority members in KPS, the March violence further undermined this confidence when the Serb KPS officers felt compelled to seek personal safety during the unrest. Furthermore, in various locations UNMIK police were not allowed to leave their station as a force protection measure. This has undoubtedly and seriously undermined their relationship with the local population.

In the **Prishtine/Pristina** region, protests in Prishtine/Pristina town began quietly on 17 March 2004, but the crowd moved quickly towards Caglavica/Cagllavice village in an attempt to break defensive barricades which Kosovo Serbs had erected. This escalated into clashes between Albanian and Serb civilians during which shots were fired by both Serbs and Albanians and 10 Serb houses were set on fire. On 18 March Caglavica/Cagllavice became a renewed focus for violent groups. In total, at least five people were killed and many injured.

In Prishtine/Pristina town on 17 March in the evening, a violent crowd attacked the YU housing complex where several Serbs who work for UNMIK live. One Serb resident was killed, another

⁹⁸ In Gjilan/Gnjilane town on 17 March, a Serb family was attacked by Albanians while KPS officers were allegedly standing by and watching the crowd burning the family's vehicle. In another incident Albanians made preparations to set on fire the house of a Serb family, also in Gjilan/Gnjilane. The police was called, arrived one hour later on the scene, only to leave minutes later without taking action and stating that their shift was over. KFOR arrived and promised patrols but could not commit static presence in this neighborhood. The inhabitants had to be eventually evacuated and the house was burned.

was stabbed but survived. 53 apartments belonging to Serbs were burnt or damaged. Police and KFOR trying to rescue the residents were beaten back by stones, petrol bombs, and sniper fire from concealed gunmen. KPS managed finally to broke in, rescuing residents. On 18 March a crowd of teenagers targeted the Serb Orthodox St.Nicolai church in the old town market area, where small contingents of KPS officers struggled to stop their progress into the narrow streets of the old town. The security forces evacuated the priest and departed, allowing the mob to set the church and the priest's house on fire. Further incidents occurred in the neighbourhoods of Ulpiana, where one flat was damaged, and Kisnica, where 2 houses and 1 flat were burnt.

In Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, Albanian crowds arrived in buses and vans in the afternoon of 17 March and proceeded to attack (presumably carefully selected) buildings that were bastions of Belgrade-sponsored Serb parallel structures such as the health house, an administrative building next to it, the post and telecommunications building and the primary school. 90 Serb houses were burnt while one church, the Sveti Sava School, the Health House in Bresje, the Serb PTT and a Serb restaurant were damaged. With the exception of the Serb residents of the Rose building (accommodating both Serbs and Albanians) and of the Masinski Park building who were not targeted, the Serb community in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje centre, a total of more than 300 persons, was forced to leave.

In Lipjan/Lipljan, an Albanian crowd attacked Serb houses in the mixed Bestin neighborhood on 17 March. Security forces evacuated Serbs to the mono-ethnic Serb neighbourhood of Kisha. Throughout the evening, mobs rampaged through Bestin, with minimal intervention from security forces. Gunfire was heard and one Serb and possibly two Albanians were killed, while dozens were injured. An orthodox priest was reportedly mistreated by KPS. The church in Lipjan/Lipljan was slightly damaged by hand grenades thrown by rioters in the church yard. Interestingly, three Serb villages⁹⁹ surrounded by six Albanian villages in Lipjan/Lipljan municipality reportedly experienced no problems, although there is said to be considerable animosity between them dating from 1999.¹⁰⁰ Likewise, in the mixed village of Rabovce/Rubovc, Serb houses, with the exception of the burning of two houses, were not targeted although the entire Serb community had been evacuated early on by KFOR. In this case, it was the majority population, who after KFOR intervention in relation to the two above houses, did not allow anyone to damage the properties. As a result of the violence, a total of 29 houses were burnt in Lipjan/Lipljan town, 1 house in Novo Naselje and 2 houses in Rabovce/Rubovc.

In Obilic/q, on 18 March mobs were attacking, burning and looting Serb houses. The bulk of the burning and looting was perpetrated by aggressive teenagers and minors, who also prevented fire engines from reaching the scene. By the end of the day, 90 houses, 40 apartments and 30 annexes were in flames while one church was set on fire. The entire Serb community was compelled to leave. Five Serbs were beaten of whom one was seriously injured.

In Podujevo/e, a crowd of 500 approached its Serbian Orthodox church on 18 March. KFOR troops guarding it were ordered to retreat when the mob broke through the outer wall. Having broken into the church, the crowd destroyed everything it could and made a bonfire of it all outside. In the cemetery the mob knocked over the headstones.

In the municipality of Shtimlje/Shtime, all Kosovo Serbs left during the unrest. Their property was burnt down. The graveyard chapel was burned. There was an attempt to blow up the church, but through KFOR and police intervention, the explosive devices were removed in time.

⁹⁹ Dobrotin/Dobratin, Donja Gusterica/Gushterice e Ulet, Gornje Gusterica/Gushterice e Eperme

¹⁰⁰ International Crisis Group, Collapse in Kosovo, 22 April 2004

In the **Gjilan/Gnjilane region**, the UNMIK Regional Building in Gjilan/Gnjilane town and the Orthodox Church were the first targets on 17 March. The violence soon spread to the Serb neighbourhoods which were attacked systematically. A 52-year old Serb was killed by the crowd outside of his house while his mother was beaten and died a few days later. A significant number of Serb houses and Serb-owned vehicles were burned. Most of the Serbs in Gjilan/Gnjilane town were evacuated, with the exception of 192 persons who hid in their homes. A violent crowd was stopped by KFOR as it approached the Serb village of Silovo/Shillove, situated just outside Gjilan/Gnjilane town and home to 1,200 Serbs¹⁰¹.

In Viti/na ten Serb homes were burned and many others looted. Nevertheless, owing to a decisive action by KFOR which literally locked down the town and imposed a curfew, the violence was stopped. Some 120 Serbs fled to surrounding villages while 74 succeeded in staying in town, mostly around the Orthodox Church under KFOR protection. Some of their houses were burned.

In Ferizaj/Urosevac, the Orthodox Church of St. Uros, guarded by KFOR, was attacked by an estimated 2,500 people on the evening of 17 March. For several hours, hundreds of Albanians besieged the KFOR detachment with stones, bricks, petrol bombs and grenades, effectively trapping the troops and wounding several soldiers. In the ensuing situation, KFOR killed a teenager with a vehicle which was being set on fire. The soldiers were eventually rescued by another KFOR detachment. The entire Serb population of the town was subsequently evacuated by KPS officers to a KFOR camp. One Serb woman died and all of the Serb homes in town were looted and burned shortly after their evacuation. The mob also desecrated and vandalized an Orthodox cemetery in Ferizaj/Urosevac town, burned three Orthodox churches in the villages of Varosh, Talinovac, and Softaj and vandalized cemeteries in Talinovac, Varosh, and Softaj.

In Novo Brdo/Novoberde municipality, explosive devices were thrown at the municipal building. Several Serb families from Kamenica/e reportedly moved to Serbia for precautionary reasons after a demonstration during which one Serb was beaten very severely. In Strpce/Shterpc, two Serbs, a father and a son, were shot dead in Drajkovce/Drajkofc on 17 March.

The Serb communities in the North of the Gjilan/Gnjilane region were targeted in a systematic manner. The communities in Viti/na and in Gjilan/Gnjilane town had been some of the most integrated in the region.

On 17 March in the **Prizren region**, a mob rampaged around the streets of Prizren town, smashing windows of any shops that they found open. Two police stations were pelted with stones, and both police and UNMIK cars were burned. The UNMIK municipality building came under sustained attack. Several churches, monasteries and seminaries were destroyed. There were reports of KFOR soldiers stepping away from their checkpoint positions as mobs approached. During the night the small Byzantine church in the "Podkalaja" area, the Saint George's Cathedral in down town, the Orthodox chapel in Shadrevan, the Saint Friday's church and its compound, and the Church of Saint Archangel's monastery were burnt down. On 18 March the "Podkalaja" area in the centre of Prizren town came under attack and was looted by groups of violent Albanians. KPS evacuated a total of 42 Kosovo Serbs from that area.

¹⁰¹ It is noteworthy that the Kosovo Serbs from Gjilan/Gnjilane town had been evacuated and relocated to Silovo/Shillove village just outside the town just before the crowd started moving towards the village. This clearly indicates that safety is not necessarily found in place of relocation or evacuation.

On 20 March an explosion destroyed an old abandoned Orthodox church near Ziviniane village, in Zhupa valley, Prizren municipality. Likewise, the regional UNMIK buildings and several UNMIK/KPS vehicles had been destroyed or damaged.

In Rahovec/Orahovac, two Serb residents of upper Rahovec/Orahovac were injured and several houses looted and burnt on 17 March. The day after, a violent crowd set the Orthodox Church on fire and caused damage in the village of Berjake/Brnjaca.

In total, 51 houses of Kosovo Serbs and 11 religious sites have been burnt down or damaged in the region. Furthermore and likewise a number of other regions, the confidence of the Serb minority towards UNMIK and KPS has been significantly eroded although KPS patrols allegedly alerted most of the Serb communities of imminent violence and conducted individual evacuations.

In the **Peje/Pec region**, in the municipality of Kline/a the Serb community from Bica/Binxha village was evacuated to the KFOR airport in Gjakove/Djakovica for one week. The entire Serb community of Grabac/Grapc in the municipality of Kline/a was evacuated by KFOR to the Serb community of Osojan/e as a precautionary measure. In the villages of Shtupel/Štupelj and Gjurgjevik/Djurdjevik, the local Albanian population, municipal representatives and KPS stopped angry Albanian crowds from reaching Grabac/Grapc and KPS protected the Serb properties.

In Pejë/Pec town, a crowd of several thousand persons attacked the village of Belo Polje/Bellopoje. Nearly all houses were damaged or destroyed. When the villagers took refuge in the church, KFOR troops did not approach in their vehicles but requested the Serbs to run to them through the crowd of young Albanians who attacked them with bricks and knives. The Serb residents were evacuated into the nearby KFOR base. In total, some 12 Kosovo Serbs were injured, 3 of them seriously.

In Gjakove/Djakovica, on 17 March the crowd attacked the Orthodox church. KFOR troops opened fire to protect the church and the four elderly Serb women living there. The church was later burned down as KFOR left with the elderly women under their protection.

The Municipal Presidents in Istog/k took action on 17 March to disperse protesting crowds in town. Likewise, in Deçan/Decani, the Municipal President personally intervened to stop crowds from marching on the Serbian Orthodox monastery.

In the **Mitrovice/a region**, in Mitrovice/a town on 17 March 2004, a large protest of ethnic Albanian residents started in the southern part of the town of Mitrovice/a, blocking the highway south of the town. In similar fashion, the ethnic Serb residents from the northern part of Mitrovice/a gathered close to the dividing bridge. Protesters on both sides started throwing stones and the situation escalated into an open conflict during which several Albanians and Serbs died and several hundred persons were wounded including KFOR soldiers. All the fighting took place close to or on the bridge dividing the two sides. Some 200 Albanians crossed into an enclave of three largely-Albanian inhabited apartment blocks on the north bank ("Three Towers") which have been permanently guarded by KFOR since 1999. 3 Serb families from those blocks were evacuated by KFOR to a safer location in North Mitrovice/a. In the afternoon, all Albanians had been pushed back across the river, and the police began to reassert control. On 18 March there were minor clashes throughout the day and sniper fire on KFOR and Serbs in North Mitrovice/a, causing casualties. A group of Albanians attacked the Orthodox church of St. Sava in South Mitrovice/a, which had seen a scaling back of KFOR protection just days prior to the riots. The church's position next to a KFOR compound afforded no protection.

In Svinjare/Frasher village a violent crowd descended on 18 March upon the Serb village. The Serb population asked KFOR for protection indicating their intention to remain in the village. KFOR decided to evacuate 120 Serb families (465 individuals) and bring them to the nearby KFOR base. All Serb owned buildings (115 houses) in the village were burnt and livestock and pets slaughtered, only a few hundred meters away from the KFOR camp. The looting continued for several days without any substantive response from any of the security agencies.

In Drenica, in the municipality of Skenderaj/Srbica, a crowd of teenagers approached the medieval convent of Devic. In advance of its arrival, KFOR evacuated 8 Serb nuns and one priest. The children looted and set fire to the convent.

In the municipality of Vushtrri/Vucitrn in Slatina/Sllatine, 9 families (24 individuals) were attacked. 3 Serbs suffered serious injuries and all villagers were evacuated by KFOR. Their properties were destroyed.¹⁰² The women and children in Gojbuje/Gojbulja were evacuated to Mitrovice/a north and to the KFOR base in Maxhunaj/Novo Selo, but they returned after the end of the riots; the village itself did not come under attack. In the ethnically mixed village of Maxhunaj/Novo Selo, where 35 Serb houses were recently reconstructed, but awaiting their owners to return, only a few houses were slightly damaged as the Albanian villagers prevented further damages.

A.4. Gorani and Bosniaks

Whereas Gorani and Bosniaks were not directly targeted, in some locations they felt that as a minority they may come under attack and thus opted for precautionary movements to safer places. For example, in **Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje**, several Gorani families reportedly left their homes for precautionary reasons, and found accommodation with Serb friends in other parts of the town. After few days they had returned to their homes which were undamaged.

Another example is **Mitrovice/a** where 5 Bosniak families (15 individuals) relocated further north from the Bosniak Mahala in North Mitrovice/a while another two families were evacuated by the police to the south. Another 2 Bosniak families (4 persons) left from North Mitrovice/a to the southern part of the town. The direction of flight very much depended on family and social contacts. Bosniaks living in the south did not report security incidents although the events had a negative effect on their perception of security and stability.

In other locations, such as **Prishtine/Pristina** town, close ties with the majority population meant that the security situation of Gorani and Bosniaks did not suffer during the unrest.

A.5. Kosovo Albanians

In **Mitrovice/a**, a total of 21 Kosovo Albanians families (90 persons) fled from various sectors¹⁰³ of North Mitrovice/a to Pristine/a, Vushtrri/Vucitrn and south Mitrovice/a following threats and assaults by Kosovo Serbs. According to one family, Serbs threw a hand grenade at their house

¹⁰² By contrast, the Serb enclaves of Banjska/Banjske, Grace and Priluze/Prilluzhe were not attacked.

¹⁰³ Oslobdjenja street, Ibrahim Tema street, Kolasinska street, Bosnian Mahala, Serdara J Vukotica and Vojvode Putnika street

which seriously injured two persons. KPS reportedly asked the family to leave. Kosovo Serbs seized the apartments of the Albanians after their expulsion.

Although the Albanian community in Kodra e Minatoreve//Mikronaselje was not targeted, the civil unrest prevented them from leaving the neighbourhood and they were therefore only able to access basic services once KFOR started providing escorts for buses going to the south of the town.

In the village of Braina near the Serbian border, Podujeve/Podujevo (Pristine/Pristina region) one family fled its home fearing revenge incursions to be launched from Serbian territory. The house was burned down. Likewise, in the municipality of **Strpce/Shterpc** (Gjilan/Gnjilane region) various Albanian families in Biti e Eperme and Poshtme/Gornja and Donja Bitinja were afraid of retaliatory attacks, and left their home communities for precautionary reasons or postponed their return from visits to Ferizaj/Urosevac.

B. The situation of minorities after the civil unrest

B.1. The general situation

The inter-ethnic clashes have seriously challenged the "Standards before Status" process, including benchmarks relating to the return and reintegration of minority communities.

In the aftermath of the violent clashes, inter-ethnic relations in Kosovo remain tense, and further violence is possible. The current fragile security containment has been heavily reliant upon KFOR. Temporarily deployed reinforcements were a crucial factor in bringing the situation under control at the height of the violence. KFOR and UNMIK police are now maintaining a high level of visibility and presence, particularly in minority areas. KFOR has stepped up its presence in particularly vulnerable areas, is temporarily providing fixed checkpoints for over 50 minority communities, primarily in Kosovo Serb areas, and is patrolling some 15 patrimonial sites. Static patrols have been reintroduced in many areas. This represents a change in terms of overall security arrangements as KFOR had previously been gradually scaling back patrolling arrangements and 'un-fixing' checkpoints/patrols in response to perceived improvements in the overall security situation.¹⁰⁴

The confidence of minority communities in the ability of KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS to protect them and to protect their property has suffered a very serious blow. The civil unrest revealed the limited capacity of KFOR and UNMIK, as well as some serious gaps in Kosovo's security apparatus. The latter became *inter alia* apparent through the lack of coordination and force coherence between the different security forces in the regions.¹⁰⁵ Minorities thus fear that if

¹⁰⁴ It should be recalled that over the past two years KFOR has gradually decreased its troops from original 45,000 to 17,500, and moved away from manpower-costly fixed positions towards "area security". At the same time, many duties previously fulfilled by the UNMIK police were being turned over to the KPS. Fixed presence at numerous religious sites had been reduced to a minimum leaving them extremely vulnerable to attack as was seen during the recent spate of violence.

¹⁰⁵ According to the International Crisis Group (Collapse in Kosovo, 22 April 2004), "although security and police officials claimed to have been putting lives before property (...) that phrase papered over actions that in too many locales was abject capitulation. Minorities were evacuated only for their homes, churches or monasteries immediately to be ceded to mobs intent on arson." Furthermore, "for the perpetrators of violence the mid-March events clearly demonstrated that KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS are beatable".

violence erupts again, they and their property will not be effectively protected. Moreover, having lost their aura of invulnerability, KFOR and UNMIK could well become subject to further attacks against their personnel and infrastructure which will further undermine their ability to protect minority groups¹⁰⁶. In some locations, KPS officers stand accused of complicity with the rioters.

UNMIK police has been investigating all incidents related to the violent events. So far, investigations have resulted in over 260 arrests out of which 50 have been reportedly put on trial. Most arrests have been so far concentrated in the Gjilan/Gnjilane and Prizren region, whilst there have been fewer cases in Prishtinë/Priština, Pejë/Pec, and Mitrovicë/a. International prosecutors are currently working on more than 45 cases and approximately 120 other cases are being handled by the local judiciary.¹⁰⁷ The feeling among minority groups, particularly Kosovo Serbs, has been that as long as the organizers of the violent acts directed against them have not been arrested, law enforcement authorities cannot be trusted. Security incidents involving ethnic minorities continue, albeit to a lesser degree, most probably due to imposed or self-imposed restrictions to freedom of movement resulting in less inter-action between the majority and the minority population. The still volatile situation for minority communities as a whole in Kosovo is evidenced by the fact that despite very few security incidents involving the Turkic community during the last few years, a Turkic living in Mitrovicë/a North was forced to leave his apartment after threats made by several Kosovo Serbs.

The sudden escalation of violence and the apparently coordinated choice of targets have left many minority communities, particularly Kosovo Serb and Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities, with a heightened sense of fear and isolation. The violence has had an extremely negative impact on the freedom of movement of members of the minority communities of Kosovo, particularly Kosovo Serbs, who have been affected by the deterioration in the security environment. Their fears regarding the ability to travel safely have been increased and they are largely unwilling to rely on patrolling by the KPS. Many are now unwilling to travel without KFOR escorts. This has profoundly undermined the position of minority communities, who are now more isolated than at any time in the past three years. Restrictions on movement also adversely affect their economic situation as they are unable to obtain supplies and travel on business.¹⁰⁸ Humanitarian organizations have been delivering humanitarian assistance to the IDP temporary shelters and minority enclaves. Parallel structures in education, healthcare and other areas have further augmented in number and scope. In some locations, Kosovo Serbs, Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian and other minority groups have been able to reestablish the limited freedoms they enjoyed prior to the civil unrest. From discussions with members of the minority communities in Gjilan/Gnjilane region, UNHCR has learned that behind the facade of relative normality, many minority communities, particularly Kosovo Serbs and Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian, have stepped up preparations for new emergencies.

In various locations the level of destruction of private accommodation and key infrastructure within minority areas has prevented many of the recently displaced persons from returning to their homes. Other IDPs left for Serbia and Montenegro or other destinations. Of the 4,100 initially displaced, some 800 individuals have now returned to their home communities. However, when asked by UNHCR about the reasons, they invariably invoke the lack of

¹⁰⁶ The killing of two police officers (an UNMIK and a KPS officer) during an attack on a patrol in Podujevo on the night of 23 March 2004 has been a case in point.

¹⁰⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, 30 April 2004, paragraph 10

¹⁰⁸ Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo, 30 April 2004, paragraph 26

alternative and the strong wish to be home while heavily underlining their continued fear and lack of confidence. It is nevertheless noteworthy that in most communities, basic minority rights and overall security conditions have been gradually improving since the end of March.

B.2. Kosovo Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian

Since the end of the March events, in the regions of Gjilane/Gnjilane, Prizren and Peje/Pec most communities have gradually resumed the relative levels of minority rights they enjoyed before the events. For instance, in the municipalities of Gjilan/Gnjilane town and Viti/na Roma children have started attending school classes again.

Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities fear, however, that the security incidents that the Roma and Ashkali suffered during the violent events in the Prishtine/Pristina region and the violent attack against the Ashkali settlement in Vushtrri/Vucitrn, are indicators of the risks that their communities potentially face in any part of Kosovo. Based on that perception, various Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities have restricted their movements outside their enclave.¹⁰⁹ Most of the displaced Ashkaelia from Vushtrri/Vucitrn have expressed reluctance to return to their homes on security grounds. In the region of Mitrovica/a, KPS/community police increased patrols in Ashkaelia communities.¹¹⁰ Overall, the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian communities have lost confidence towards law enforcement authorities while in some areas (for example in Pejë/Pec), they acknowledge the positive role played by certain local (majority) authorities.¹¹¹

B.3. Kosovo Serbs

Most of the recently displaced Serbs have been staying in Serb enclaves. Further security incidents since March 2004 in mixed areas manifest how precarious the security conditions remain. Although KFOR has re-established various fixed check-points and stepped up patrolling, confidence in law-enforcement authorities is very low, particularly in those areas that were the most targeted and subjected to much destruction and violence. Inter-ethnic relations with the majority population are strained, particularly in locations where local population/authorities were either directly engaged in violent acts or failed to intervene. In some locations inter-ethnic relations improved following the personal intervention of municipal authorities and Albanian neighbors who prevented violence against the local Serb community.

As a result of the continuing volatile security, freedom of movement has significantly decreased particularly in the regions of Prishtine/Pristina and Mitrovica/a, and notably with regard to movements to ethnically mixed areas (as opposed to movements between enclaves). Serbs have started using the services of the minority bus lines which operate between enclaves. Parallel structures have increased although some municipal authorities have started providing public services in the enclaves.

¹⁰⁹ For example, the Roma, Ashkaelia and Egyptian community in the upper quarter in Rahovec/Orahovac and Velika Hoca/Hoqa e Madhe in the Prizren region is avoiding unnecessary movements outside the enclave out of fear of being targeted on grounds of association with the neighboring Serb community. Likewise, in the municipality of Prishtine/Pristina Ashkali have been reluctant to resume their garbage collection activities at night due to security reasons.

¹¹⁰ For example, Dy Korriku/Sitnicko Naselje in Mitrovica/e municipality.

¹¹¹ e.g. authorities from Gjakove/Djakovica visiting RAE IDPs in Montenegro

In the region of Prishtine/Pristina, most of the Serbs who came under attack in cities and ethnically mixed villages have remained in displacement in mono-ethnic villages such as Gracanica/Gracanice and Caglavica/Cagllavice in Prishtine/Pristina municipality, or in mono-ethnic neighbourhoods such as in Obilic/q and Lipljan/Lipjan municipalities, where they feel less insecure. Serbs perceive the current security conditions as very precarious. Several families have sold their houses and departed for Serbia¹¹². Attempts to return to home communities are often accompanied by security incidents. A case in point has been Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, where two now empty Serb houses were set on fire on 3 April 2004 to prevent returns. On 24 April 2004, unknown individuals looted the Orthodox church in Bresje. Likewise, a Serb flat in a mixed building next to the railway station, was stoned by children. In Obilic/c a Serb was stoned while visiting his house and suffered injuries. Looting of temporarily abandoned Serb houses has been going on in all municipalities. In Prishtine/Pristina town, unknown persons attempted to set the YU Building on fire the day before refurbishment activities were planned to start. In Gracanica/a on 21 April 2004 a 70 year old Serb woman was found strangled in her place of displacement, and on 5 June 2004, also in Gracanica/a a 16 year old Serb youngster was killed in a drive-by-shooting.

Due to the precarious security conditions, Serbs leave their enclaves only on an exceptional case-by case basis, mostly in private vehicles. Whereas some Serbs use the public transport between Prishtine/Pristina and Gracanica/e, in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, they refrain from using municipality buses. In Lipljan/Lipjan, Serbs circulate only in areas where they constitute the majority and where KFOR ensures security. Movements to ethnically mixed areas have virtually come to an end. For instance, Serbs do not travel any longer to the multi-ethnic markets like they did in high numbers prior to the mid-March unrest. Some minority bus lines, such as the one operating between Kuzmin and Ugljare villages, in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje municipality, have resumed their services.

In terms of access to services, the use of parallel structures has further increased in the field of education and health services. As far as public services are concerned, many Serbs have fears to access public services in Prishtine/Pristina town and they travel instead to Gracanica/e or Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje where services such as payment of pensions and social assistance are available. Moreover, in Prishtine/Pristina, Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, Obilic/c and Lipljan/Lipjan, representatives of municipal authorities have started sending mobile teams to mono-ethnic communities to provide public services.

In light of the situation, KFOR has re-established fixed checkpoints in various locations¹¹³. Likewise, in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje and Obilic/c KFOR/police patrols and searches of vehicles/houses have increased. Notwithstanding the increased security measures, the lack of confidence in the KPS which existed to some extent prior to the March events, has been further eroded particularly in Obilic/q and Prishtine/Pristina town (YU building) and in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje. As a result, Albanian KPS is witnessing serious difficulties in entering Serb areas, despite the fact that several persons have been arrested for their alleged participation in the riots.

¹¹² e.g in Lipljan/Lipjan

¹¹³ For instance, in *Dorja Brnica* where prior to the mid-March events no inter-ethnic problems were reported, KFOR has established permanent presence. In the same vein, in Lipljan/Lipjan and Obilic/c fixed check-points were set up

Overall, very few of the recently displaced have been able to return to their home community. A positive case has been the Serb community of Rabovce/Rubovc, Lipljan/Lipljan municipality, where the majority community protected Serb property against aggression. The Serbs returned to their home community one week after the unrest and currently do not require static KFOR/police protection. In other locations, some of the new IDPs whose houses have not been burnt down have returned to their home communities while PISG have started to reconstruct private homes and community infrastructure.

In the region of **Gjilane/Gnjilane**, the objective security situation and security perceptions vary widely within the region and depend partly on the level of KFOR's engagement in March: in Viti/na town where KFOR imposed a complete shut down within hours after the violence broke out, almost all Serbs have returned. By contrast, in Gjilan/Gnjilane town, where the violence was most pronounced and where KFOR continues to implement unfixing plans despite the volatility of the current situation, only few Serbs have come back. In general, minorities' perception of security depends on how large their community is in the area, on ongoing security incidents, on the traumatic experience already suffered and on whether or not their house/property was damaged during the recent unrest. For example, in Gjilan/Gnjilane town, looting of Serb houses has continued since March. UNHCR has learned that some Serbs in the region are prepared to depart should violence resume.

The secondary impact of the inter-ethnic violence of March is felt in several ways: the freedom of movement of most of the estimated 15,000 Serbs living in the Gjilan/Gnjilane, Viti/na and Novo Brdo/Novoberde municipalities has significantly decreased, although minority bus lines have resumed their services. This has led to shortages in basic items and an increase in prices. In Strpce/Shterpce, Serb pensioners have refused for security reasons to travel to Ferizaj/Urosevac to collect their pensions. In Gjilan/Gnjilane, stone throwing, intimidation and ongoing looting have been important obstacles for the freedom of movement of the Serb minority population. In Viti/na, Serbs asked for separate shifts for their children in the two mixed schools in Mogila/Mogille and Binac/Bince.

On the other hand, some returnees and Serb IDPs in Zegra, Gjilan/Gnjilane municipality, have started accessing and cultivating their fields, passing without any difficulties through areas populated by Albanians. Likewise, some Serbs from various villages have started accessing public services in Gjilan/Gnjilane town and reportedly have not experienced security problems. This is the case for example for the weekly Serb market in the town which now has a higher attendance by Serbs from neighboring rural villages than by those who still reside in the town. In the same vein, most of the Serb employees of municipality administrations have returned to their jobs. Finally, despite the fragile security situation, more than half of the 300 recently displaced Serb IDPs have returned to their home communities.

Numerous arrests have taken place in the aftermath of the unrest, but the status of the investigations remains unknown. Depending on the nature of the crime, investigations are conducted either on the local police station or on the regional level, which has made it more difficult for the victims to follow-up their cases. A main obstacle also was the initial isolation of the victims who were displaced and had little or no access to the Police Station in the town.¹¹⁴

Confidence in law enforcement institutions remains low. KFOR continues to unfix static presence and to phase into area-presence or hand-over to KPS. All this while keeping in mind that the Serb population's confidence towards KPS and UNMIK Police has been severely undermined. In some

¹¹⁴ e.g. in Viti/na or in Gjilan/ Gnjilane where the town populations were targeted.

municipalities such as Gjilan/Gnjilane town and Viti/na, local majority authorities have managed to establish harmonious relations with the Serb minority. By contrast, in Ferizaj/Uroševac, relations of the minority population with the municipal authorities have remained strained.

In the **Prizren region**, the general security situation has been gradually improving since the end of March. No new threats or assaults against Serbs have been reported. KFOR's post riot policy of strong and visible presence of its forces in security sensitive locations has remained unchanged. KFOR soldiers and KPS officers have been patrolling in various parts of Prizren town.

There are indications that in Prizren town, inter-ethnic relations are slowly recovering through interaction between the Serb and the majority community at different levels. A case in point has been the water project in the area of Novake. The Serb population in Novake and the surrounding Albanian villages have jointly participated in the elaboration of the project and started to implement it altogether after the mid-March events. Municipal authorities organized in April a solemn inauguration of the implementation of the inter-ethnic project. Likewise, Serb residents in Prizren town have started circulating outside their immediate residential areas, albeit in a cautious and 'low profile' manner. Similar positive trends in terms of freedom of movement and inter-ethnic relations have been noted in Zhupa Valley.

Minority bus shuttle lines¹¹⁵ have started to resume their services which has positively impacted on the freedom of movement. Nevertheless, due to prevailing security concerns, these shuttles do not stop in Prizren town anymore. In terms of access to basic service, Serb medical teams from Strpce/Shterpce have started to visit communities in Sredska/Srecke and Mushnikove/Mušnikovo and their respective health houses. The medical teams proceeding from the enclave of Shterpce/Strpce have been escorted by KFOR. On the other hand, health structures run by UNMIK/PISG have continued providing services to all minority communities though in some locations, the Serb community has been refusing their services as they prefer to resort solely to the parallel structures.

Likewise the other regions, confidence towards KFOR, UNMIK Police and KPS has suffered, while the Serb communities are also concerned that the political leadership did not/could not prevent the escalation of violence and vandalism. There is also great concern that the majority community has failed to identify the perpetrators of the violence and that it distances itself from extremist elements. Various examples illustrate the lack of confidence in security forces. The Serb IDPs who found refuge in the KFOR camp in Prizren have been reluctant to leave the camp and move to alternative accommodations. They also oppose the reconstruction of their houses out of fear of being "forgotten" by the international community once they are back in their home communities. Serb remainees in Rahovec/Orahovac refuse escort by Albanian KPS officers. Serb communities insist on KFOR escorts, or at least joint escorts by UNMIK Police and KFOR. It is noteworthy that KFOR has been checking the identity of KPS officers/patrols entering minority areas.

Notwithstanding, it is also noteworthy that security forces and police have stepped up efforts to regain the confidence of minority populations. In the aftermath of the riots, the police set up a mixed Task Force at the regional level in order to coordinate the investigations and in Prizren municipality, more than 100 suspects have been arrested.

¹¹⁵ Prizren-Novake, Prizren-Strpce/Shterpce Zvecan-Rahovec/Orahovac, Zhupa-Shterpce as well as the Novake Shuttle

In the region of **Peje/Pec** the security situation has been continuously improving, though sporadic security incidents such as the stoning of the minority bus shuttle from Pejë/Pec¹¹⁶ to Mitrovica/a in the village of Runik on 14 April indicate that inter-ethnic tensions prevail in some areas. In many areas, Serb communities¹¹⁷ have regained the level of relative freedoms enjoyed prior to the unrest. Nonetheless, the mid-March events have seriously affected the perception of security and freedom of movement.

Minority communities have acknowledged the positive role played by certain local (majority) authorities.¹¹⁸ It is also interesting to note that some elements within the Kosovo Serb communities in the region have become more radical and are now favouring closer ties to Serbian authorities. Consequently, parallel structures have gained influence as a result of the mid-March events. This position is not shared by more moderate persons who advocate for some level of cooperation and integration with the majority community.

In the **Mitrovica/a region**, although KFOR has managed to bring the overall security situation under control, inter-ethnic relations are very tense, evidenced among others by the fact that visits by the newly displaced to Frasher/Svinjare village to collect belongings only started in May 2004. According to the Regional Police Commander, the situation has reverted to 1999, with inter-ethnic relations more polarized than ever. KFOR has re-established various fixed check-points. In some enclaves, 24-hour presence is guaranteed whereas in others regular patrolling is done.

Confidence in police, KFOR, UNMIK and local authorities has significantly diminished, particularly among the newly displaced people and in those areas where security forces and local authorities did not prevent forced displacement of minorities nor the destruction of their property. Some IDPs claim that during the civil unrest they recognized KPS Albanian officers either actively participating in violent incidents or passively standing by. Minorities have criticized local authorities' lack of action to prevent the ethnic violence. In Priluzje/Prilluzhe village, distrust in the law enforcement authorities has meant that the multi-ethnic police unit has ceased functioning. Instead a so-called "neighbourhood watch" has started operating and patrolling the area.

On the positive side, in Novo Selo/Novo Selo the local majority population and the police actively prevented attacks against recently reconstructed Serb houses. This has enabled a new dialogue between the ethnic groups. In the aftermath of the mid-March events, representatives of the Albanian receiving community met for the first time with representatives of the Serb community and welcomed return movements. This underscores the key role that the majority population (including local authorities) and the local police play in promoting and underscoring ethnic dialogue opportunities.

In terms of freedom of movement, very few movements between minority and majority areas have been reported. In various communities, KFOR has been providing escort to school buses, minority shuttles, trains and private vehicles.

¹¹⁶ The regular bus shuttles from Istog/k, Kline/a and Pejë/Pec resumed their services in late March/early April

¹¹⁷ e.g. Osojan/e and Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec

¹¹⁸ e.g. the Deputy President of Kline/a municipality visited the Serb community in Binxhe/Bica following their return, as well as positive reactions by authorities in Istog/k and Deçan/Decani during and after the riots.

B.4. Bosniaks and Gorani

The few Bosniaks and Gorani who were displaced during the mid-March unrest have returned to their home communities. Returnees and remainees have resumed the same levels of freedoms they enjoyed prior to the events. Nevertheless and for reasons stated in other parts of this update, it is important to underline the continued and accrued vulnerability of these communities in the event of new violence. Likewise all other ethnic minorities in Kosovo, the Bosniaks and Gorani have now an increased level of fear and their confidence in existing security systems has been subject to the same erosion as other groups.

B.5. Kosovo Albanians

Most of the recently displaced Kosovo Albanians in a minority position have returned to their home communities and resumed the same relative levels of freedoms they enjoyed before the mid-March events.

In the Mitrovica/a region, the villages of Kostova/Kosutovo, Bistrica/e and Ceraje/a in the municipality of Leposavic/q started accessing basic services in South Mitrovica/a only when the minority bus shuttle from these 'KBC villages' resumed its services at the beginning of May. KFOR has increased its patrols on the main road to South Mitrovica/a, though it is not escorting the bus line. In the municipality of Zvecan, the villages of Kelmend/Lipaj, Boljetin/Boletin and Zaza/Zhazha have not reported security incidents since the mid-March unrest. In the village of Kodra e Minatoreve/Mikronaselje, Kosovo Albanians in a minority position have been reluctant to travel to South Mitrovica for security reasons. In general, Kosovo Albanians in minority communities perceive their security situation as worse than before March because of a higher level of (violent) expectation and instability combined with a lack of confidence in their immediate environment in general.

C. Overall conclusions

The mid-March civil unrest has been a major setback for the protection of ethnic minorities in Kosovo. Opinions are divided as to whether or not the protests were organized and the root causes of these events are still being analyzed. Much of the future stability of Kosovo and of all its population, including the ethnic communities, will depend on effectively addressing these causes and on doing so in a timely manner.

Irrespective, the inter-ethnic violence left many dead, hundreds of injured and thousands of minority community members forcibly displaced. Aside from the more visible impact of destruction and displacement, the broader and more durable consequences of this violence remain uncertain. Whereas a significant number of Serb communities, Roma and Ashkaelia villages and neighbourhoods and Albanian minority citizens in the North of Kosovo came under direct attack, other villages accommodating the same ethnic minorities reportedly experienced no problems. However, this factor alone must not be taken as a clear indicator that these locations are safe or will be spared should inter-ethnic violence resume. In the same vein, whereas Bosniaks and Goranis were not directly targeted this time, the mere fact that they are in a minority position meant that some of them felt compelled to flee.

The overall security situation has improved in that no further violent incidents to that scale have taken place in Kosovo since March. Notwithstanding, the March violence has dramatically reduced a returns process that was showing signs of improvement, both in quantity and in quality. Minority areas were specifically targeted, sending a message that minorities and returnees were not welcome in Kosovo. To date, only 800 of the 4,100 newly displaced have returned to their home communities. The majority who remain in displacement in Kosovo have indicated their strong desire to return citing the provision of a dependably secure environment as the first and foremost condition for these returns. Most of them remain terribly shaken by the crisis and question the viability of a life in Kosovo if changes do not occur, particularly with regard to their safety and freedom of movement. In many cases, there are also no places to return to given the destruction of homes and of the social and economic fabric and infrastructure of their communities, including churches, schools and health facilities.

On a broad scale, inter-ethnic relations between communities, in particular Kosovo Serbs and Albanians, have remained very tense and expectative. Security incidents involving mainly Kosovo Serbs are still occurring and it is the prevailing perception that is not safe to travel to areas where the opposite ethnic group constitutes the majority have negatively impacted on freedom of movement. As Kosovo Serbs are becoming more dependent on parallel structures, especially in the field of health and education, many seek access to public services in areas where their ethnic group constitutes the majority. Likewise, many of them access public services such as payment of pensions or social assistance in areas where the ethnic group constitutes the majority. There is also a marked reduction in the number of persons (mainly Serbs) now living in ethnically mixed areas.

The situation of ethnic minorities in Kosovo remains precarious and subject to the evolution of their security environment as well to their indiscriminate access to freedom of movement and to public services. Forced return and/or uncoordinated returns of minorities in such a fragile environment may contribute to the further deterioration of the situation. This also concerns the forced return of minorities into minority or majority communities that are not their area of origin.

The coming months will be determinant of the stabilisation of Kosovo and for the full and all-inclusive implementation of the Security Council Resolution 1244 as it relates to the return of refugees and IDPs.

Appendix 1

Non-exhaustive list of selected security incidents involving minorities January 2003 – April 2004

Killings

Region	Description of the incident	Minority
Prizren	On 31 December 2002, a Gorani male was killed by unknown person(s) in his house in the village Donji Krstec. According to available information, it would appear that the perpetrator (s) were armed and wearing masks. So far it cannot be concluded if this was an ethnically motivated crime or simply an increase in the level of cross-border movements, which has led to an increase on attacks on property and thefts – particularly along the border areas.	K-Gorani
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 17.05.2003, the body of a Serb man was found in a bush near the Serb village of Vrbovac, Viti/na municipality, with a single gunshot wound to the head. The victim is a former - reportedly hard-line - deputy mayor of Klokot. A note with inscription "AKSH" was placed beside the body.	K-Serb
Prishtine/ Pristina	Reported on 05/06.2003, occurred on 04.06.2003 in Obiliq/c unknown persons entered a K-Serbian house, assaulted the family members in their beds and murdered 80-year-old K-Serbian male, his 78-year-old wife and their 53-year-old son before setting their house on fire . The Fire Brigade extinguished the fire. The initial investigation confirmed the use of firearms and blunt heavy object. The family car was also reported missing. On 05/06 at 1600 hrs the family car was found completely burned down in an open field near the victims' house.	K-Serbs
Prishtine/ Pristina	On 11.08.2003 in Lip(l)jan two known persons, alleged to be K-Albanians from a near-by village, shot a K-Serbian male in the head and then fled the scene. The victim sustained serious injuries of which he died a week later in Belgrade hospital. <u>Antecedent:</u> On 05.08. he had found two hand grenades in his hay bale with pins tied to each other with a wire.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	On 13.08.2003, several unidentified gunmen opened fire from automatic weapons at a group of K-Serbian juveniles bathing in a stream in-between a K-Albanian and the K-Serbian village of Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec. As a result a 19-year-old K-Serbian male juvenile was killed on the spot, while 5 injured juveniles (4 males and a female) were taken to a near-by KFOR compound and were later evacuated to Peje/Pec hospital. A 12-year-old K-Serbian boy died on the way to the hospital. <u>Second incident:</u> A civilian car with which one of the wounded children was taken to the hospital, broke down in the market area of Peje/Pec, a dispute occurred with bystanders, the car got damaged.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	A bomb attack took place in Cernica, Gjilan/ Gnjilane municipality, on 31.08.2003. An explosion in the Serb part of this mixed village, close to a shop, injured five Serb men. A 35 year old Serb, with severe leg injuries was medically evacuated by a KFOR to Camp Bondsteel, where he died the following morning. Three victims were transported to Vranje hospital, while the fifth was treated locally. <u>A second explosion</u> that occurred 300m from the first one within seconds, causing no casualties as the explosive device reportedly rolled into the river. It was revealed that two hand grenades thrown from a car caused the explosions.	K-Serb
2004		
Peje/Pec	In Pejë/Pec, on 15.01.2004, A K-Albanian male assaulted a K-Roma juvenile with a wooden stick. He also shot twice at the K-Roma juvenile's	K-Roma and K-

	uncle, a K-Albanian, who attempted to protect the boy. The victim was severely injured and was later declared dead in hospital. The youngster sustained light injuries. The police does not see the incident as being ethnically motivated.	Albanian
Prishtine/ Pristina	In Lipjan/Lipljan, on 19.02.2004 a K-Serbian male and a female were found dead with gunshot wounds inside a vehicle parked on a road in an ethnically mixed area.	K- Serb

Shootings

Region	Description of the incident	Minority
Prishtine / Pristina	At around midnight of 11.02.2003 two persons forcibly entered a K-Serbian house in D.Jugovica (one of Prishtine/Pristina's North villages), severely beat a 65 year old K-Serbian woman, shot her twice in the leg and fled. Some 18 months ago, her son was also beaten and he left to Serbia shortly after the beating.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 22.02.2003, in Mogila village, Viti/na municipality, a Serb owned shop was target to bullets from an automatic weapon fired by unknown person/s. A local Serb sustained injuries to chest and abdomen, as he was trying to see the perpetrator. He was hospitalized in Vranje. The investigation continues. KFOR established two checkpoints around the village.	K-Serb
Prizren	On 23.06.2003, a minivan with Serbian registration plates which is regularly operated by a K-Bosniak between Kosovo and Serbia, was shot at three to four times in Prizren Municipality. It was transporting four K-Bosniaks, one K-Gorani and three K-Albanians, one of whom was slightly wounded.	K-Bosniak
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	In Kamenice/a on 24.06.2003, unknown persons fired three shots at vehicle bearing Serbian number plates with K-Serb male and female inside. Neither injuries nor damages reported.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 18.08.2003 in Gjilan/Gnjilane, near Mozgovo, a return site of 18 K-Serbs, unknown persons fired shots at a Serb driver, no injuries reported.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	In Binxhe/Bica , on 26.08.2003 unknown person(s) shot and seriously injured a K-Serbian male. The victim sustained stomach injuries and was transported to the KFOR (Spanish) Hospital. Two weeks earlier, tracing bullets had been shot close to returnee's house.	K-Serbian Returnee
Prishtine/ Pristina	Obilic/q, on 26.08.2003 a K-Serbian male reported that on 19.05 a known K-Albanian male fired three shots at him while he was driving his vehicle. On 02.09.2003, the case was re-classified into a "shooting incident" due to lack of evidence of an attack against the victim. The investigation continues.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 04.10.2003 a K-Albanian male was arrested after he fired four shots at a 75-year-old K-Serbian female, who attempted to visit her house illegally occupied by the K-Albanian family. The victim sustained abdominal and upper thigh injuries and was hospitalized in critical condition. After her condition was stabilized, the victim was evacuated to the Prishtine/Pristina University Hospital. A loaded pistol and two spent cartridges were found at the scene. The perpetrator confessed that he also hid a hand grenade in his shop, after which ammunition was found. The victim subsequently died.	K-Serb
Prishtine/ Pristina	As part of a series of incidents in Obiliq/c (see under stoning below), on 26.10.2003, unknown persons opened fire at a K-Serbian house and fled the scene. Six bullet holes were found on the walls. No injuries were reported. <u>Two hours later</u> , unknown persons opened fire at another K-Serbian house and fled the scene. About 30 bullet holes were found on the walls. No injuries were reported. In a follow-up search, several spent cartridges were found in a garden of a neighbouring K-Albanian house. The police claims that the victim refused to cooperate with Police and give a statement.	K-Serb
2004		

Pristine/ Pristina	3 km NW of Lipjan – 10/01 – 2000 hrs. An unknown person fired several shots from a passing-by vehicle at a K-Serbian male in Novo Naselje village. The victim sustained injuries and was hospitalized. The following three days, K-Serbs gathered in Novo Naselje to protest against the incident (on 11.01. about 250 Serbs, on 12.01. about 150 K-Serbs and on 13.01. 50 K-Serbs). In reaction, about 30 K-Albanian males from the nearby village of Suvi Do arrived to the scene on 11.01, armed with sticks and axes. They set up a roadblock and the situation aggravated in fighting and stoning between the two groups. Ten persons sustained injuries (six K-Serbian and four K-Albanian males), of which three K-Serbs were seriously wounded. All the victims were hospitalized locally. Police and KFOR intervened. On 18.02.2003, a K-Albanian male suspect was arrested under a Court warrant. His house was searched but no weapon was found.	K-Serb
Pristine/ Pristina	Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje, on 03.03.2004 unknown person(s) shot at and injured a K-Egyptian male who was collecting metallic disposal. The victim sustained non-life threatening injuries at the foot and was hospitalized.	K-Egyptian

Grenade attacks/ Arsons

Region	Description of the incident	Minority
Peje/Pec	In Gjakovë/Dakovica, on 16.01.2003, following an explosion investigation a hand grenade was found near a K-Egyptian's house.	K-Egyptian
Mitrovica/ a	On 07.02.2003, unknown suspects threw a homemade explosive into a garden of a K-Albanian house in Bosniak Mahalla (Mitrovica/aNorth) which broke five windows No injuries reported.	K-Albanian
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Reported on 10.02.2003, in Vitia/Vitina on 07.02.2003. following a grenade attack at a K-Serbian-owned bar in an ethnically mixed village of Mogila, four K-Serbian males sustained various injuries. Two of them, with serious injuries, were evacuated to the Vranje Hospital (Serbia), while two others were treated in a local health house and subsequently released.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Kamenice/a, on 12.02.2003, an unknown powerful explosive device (initially identified as a "timed pipe bomb" believed to be thrown from a passing-by car) was detonated behind the Youth Centre in an ethnically mixed area. No injuries were reported. A shop and a car, belonging to a K-Serbian male, were destroyed while a shop and several near-by houses were damaged. UNMIK Police and KFOR secured the scene.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Kamenice/a, on 17.02.2003, unknown person(s) planted a hand grenade in front of a K-Serbian house (newly rebuilt for returnees), in a K-Albanian area. At 1400 hrs a second grenade was found attached to a door handle of the neighbouring building.	K-Serb
Prishtine/ Pristina	Two hand grenades were thrown into the yard of a house inhabited by a K-Serb couple near Kosovo-B in Obilic/q, 15.03.2003. Although both the grenades were detonated, no person was injured. <u>On 19.03.2003</u> , another grenade explosion took place in the same area of Obilic/q, again in the yard of a K-Serb inhabited house, around 100 meters away from the last spot. The owner did not inform the police until the following morning. The police and the KFOR could not find anything but evidence of an explosion of a grenade when they examined the area. There were no casualties, nor material damage.	K-Serbs
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	In Kaçanik, on 28.06.2003, unknown person(s) threw an explosive device at a convoy of six Serbian trucks on their way to Serbia proper. The device exploded inside one of the trailers causing some material damage. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Prishtine/ Pristina	On 21.07.2003 a K-Ashkaelia family in Hallaq, Lip(l)jan , was attacked for the ninth time, when a grenade was allegedly thrown into their garden . There were no injuries.	K-Ashkaelia

Prishtine/ Pristina	On 14.08.2003 three grenade attacks on K-Ashkaelia houses took place in Halaq e Vogel/Mali Alas, Lip(l)jan. One week later two Ashkaelia houses were set on fire in Lip(l)jan town.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovice/ a	In the ethnically mixed area of Bosniak Mahalla, unknown person(s) threw a hand grenade on a roof of a K-Bosniak's house under construction on 13.08.2003. The grenade exploded causing some damages but no injuries.	K-Bosniak
Mitrovice/ a	On 16.08.2003, a grenade exploded in the basement of the northernmost tower of the "Three Towers". No damage or injuries were reported.	K-Albanian
Prizren	On 20.09.2003 in Prizren unknown person(s) set a K-Roma house on fire causing extensive damages. No injuries were reported. A threatening note was found on the ground near the burnt house.	K-Roma
Prishtine/ Pristina	As part of a series of incidents in Obiliq/c at the end of October 2003 (see above shooting incidents), on 25 October, unknown person(s) threw a hand grenade into the yard of a K-Serbian male house. No injuries but minor damages were reported. On 30/10, the investigation revealed that it was a hand made explosive device planted in the ground that caused the explosion.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	On 28 October 2003, an explosive device was thrown at two K-Roma males repairing their car in Peje/Pec. One of the men was hospitalized. The police do not believe that this was ethnically motivated since one of the victims is a businessman and the incident may well be related to a business dispute.	K-Roma
Prishtine/ Pristina	In the second week of November, the K-Albanian leader of Mala Dobraja/Dobraje e Vogel reported that the two uninhabited RAE houses were looted again, stating that few villagers saw the perpetrators this time but did not report to the KPS.	K-RAE
Mitrovice/ a	Mitrovice/a North on 09.12.2003, for the second time within two months, unknown person(s) set a K-Serbian shop on fire causing damages amounting to about € 20,000.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 20 December, a K-Roma property occupied by a K-Albanian was burned down in Gjilan/Gnjilane town.	K-Roma/ K-Albanian
Prizren	On 22.12.2003 unknown person(s) attempted to set three K-Serbian houses on fire in the K-Serbian quarters in Rahovec/Orahovac. A Molotov cocktail was thrown into one of the houses causing damages amounting to about € 300, only minor damages were reported in the second house while the in the third house the fire was extinguished immediately.	K-Serbs
2004		
Prishtine/ Pristina	In Lip(l)jan, 14.01.2004 unknown person(s) threw an unknown explosive device in front of the main door of a K-Ashkaelia male's house, causing minor damages. No injuries were reported.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovice/ a	Vushtrri/Vucitrn, on 14.01.2004 unknown person(s) allegedly set a K-Ashkaelia male's house on fire causing damages to the roof. No injuries were reported.	K-Ashkaelia
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	Novobërdë/Novo Brdo, reported on 21.01.2004, occurred on 16.01.2004 unknown person(s) vandalized a K-Serbian male returnee's house and stole various items . During the riots on 17/18 March, the house was burned down .	K-Serb returnee
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 28 January, Civil Police found a hand grenade placed at the entrance gate of a shop in the mixed area of Crepane located at the strategic junction of Gnjilane –Bujanovac road with Kamenica. The police was investigating whether this could be linked to a Community Property Visit that was taking place the same day in Orahovac/Rahovece, but could not prove it.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	In Vitia/Vitina, 11.02.2004 unknown person(s) threw a plastic bottle filled with gasoline into a house, belonging to a K-Serbian female who is in Serbia proper at present. The house was extensively damaged.	K - Serb
Peje/Pec	In Gorazdevac/Gorazhdec, 02.03.2004 a K-Serbian female reported that on	K-Serb

	21/02, unknown persons set the main gate of her house on fire and broke two windows	
Peje/Pec	In Peje/Pec, 10.04.2004 unknown person(s) set an abandoned K-Serb house on fire.	K-Serb

Physical assaults

Region	Description of the incident	Minority
Mitrovice/a	On 26.01.2003 unknown person poured gasoline on the face of a K-Roma boy, set him ablaze and fled the scene. The victim sustained burn injuries and was hospitalized. The perpetrator was allegedly armed with a machine gun and several hand grenades.	K-Roma
Mitrovice/a	On 11.02.2003, a group of 30 K-Serbs physically illtreated a K-Albanian family of five in Zubin Potok Municipality who was on its way to an Albanian village and had accidentally driven into a Serb area. The driver sustained minor injuries and the car was damaged.	K-Albanian
Prishtine/Pristina	In Lip(l)jan on 25/04 at 1635 hrs, unknown person(s) assaulted and stabbed a K-Serbian female in her house. The victim sustained serious head injuries, was treated at a local medical facility and later transferred to Serbia proper for further treatment. In a separate incident at the same location on 27/04 at 1300 hrs, a group of unknown juveniles stoned at a K-Serbian male while he was returning home from the church.	K-Serb
Mitrovice/a	On 05.05.2003, a 62 year old K-Albanian was attacked and brutally beaten by three K-Serb males when trying to pass the road from Suvi Do to the main bridge.	K-Albanian
Gjilan/Gnjilane	In Vitia/Vitina, on 21.05.2003 four unknown K-Albanian youngsters severely beat a 90-year-old K-Serbian male at his house. The victim sustained head injuries and was transferred to Vranje hospital (in Serbia proper). The victim's wife was also assaulted but did not suffer any injuries. A small crowd of K-Serbs and K-Albanians briefly gathered, but no further incidents were reported.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	On 22.05.2003 a K-Albanian male was arrested for assaulting a K-Egyptian male in Istog/k.. No injuries were reported.	K-Egyptian
Peje/Pec	In Kline/a on 31.05.2003 a K-Albanian male was arrested for assaulting a K-Egyptian male. The victim sustained minor injuries.	K-Egyptian
Peje/Pec	In Istog/k on 06.06.2003 a K-Albanian male was arrested for assaulting a K-Bosnian male with a metal bar. The victim sustained serious injuries and was hospitalized. The investigation continues.	K-Bosniak
Mitrovice/a	In Mitrovice/a North on 09.06.2003 unknown K-Serbian males assaulted a K-Albanian male, causing him some injuries. No arrest was reported.	K-Albanian
Prishtine/Pristina	On 26.06.2003, two K-Ashkaelia women from Plemetina TCS were assaulted and beaten by a K-Albanian in Obiliq/c town.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovice/a	On 08 July, an unknown male stopped his car close to a K-Roma who was walking down the street in Mitrovice/a North and beat him.	K-Roma
Prishtine/Pristina	On 18.07.2003 in Obiliq/c three unknown persons assaulted a K-Ashkaelia male (TCS inhabitant), stabbed him with a knife and robbed him off € 160. The victim sustained some injuries and was hospitalized. KPS patrol saw incident, rescued victim,, perpetrator fled	K-Ashkaelia
Gjilan/Gnjilane	Three Kosovo Serb males assaulted a Kosovo Albanian family in a car on 15.08.2003 near Bresovica, Shterpc/Strpce, causing minor injuries to one person and damages to the car. The police believe this might have been a response to an alleged harassment of a Kosovo Serb girl in Vica/Viqe, a mixed village in the Municipality, earlier that day.	K-Albanian
Mitrovice/a	On 16.08.2003, an unknown male beat a K-Albanian male with a stone . Police transported the victim to the hospital.	K-Albanian

Mitrovica/a	On 20.08.2003, a 16 year old K-Albanian male was assaulted by unknown number of K-Serb males. The victim was injured and transported to the hospital, after he refused to give details of the incident to the police.	K-Albanian
Gjilan/Gnjilane	A 81 year old Serb woman living alone needed medical treatment after an alleged sexual assault on 17.08.2003 in her home in Gjilan/Gnjilane town. The same woman was slightly injured when hit by a car in front of UNMIK gate in Gjilan/Gnjilane at the beginning of November. The car fled the scene but UN security registered the licence plate and shared it with the police.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	9 km SW of Istok – 26/08 – 2200 hrs. A K-Albanian male was arrested for assaulting a K-Bosniak male. The victim sustained minor injuries.	K-Bosniak
Peje/Pec	On 02.09.2003 in Istog/k two known K-Albanian males assaulted a K-Bosniak female and threatened to burn her house. The victim sustained injuries and was hospitalized. Both perpetrators were arrested.	K-Bosniak
Peje/Pec	On 11.09.2003 in Istog/k three K-Albanian male students assaulted (allegedly for ethnic reasons) a 17-year-old K-Ashkaelia male student on his way to school. The victim was hospitalized with no visible injuries.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovica/a	On 14.09.2003 a Roma male was attacked and beaten by unknown K/A males when passing Vushtri/Vucitrn. His car was pushed into the Sitnica river near Stanovce. A military patrol was sent, police called but aggressors fled the scene, the victim was slightly injured.	K-Roma
Mitrovica/a	On 15.08.2003 three K-Serbs assaulted and robbed a K-Roma male in Zvecan.	K-Roma
Prizren	On 25.09.2003 in Prizren town two unknown persons assaulted a K-Serb couple who were returning from the bank where they had collected their pension. The perpetrators attacked the male by hitting him with a wooden stick causing severe injuries. KFOR transported the victim to Prizren hospital.	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 30.10.2003, a 70 year-old Serb from Donja Budriga was reported to have sustained severe injuries in the centre of Gnjilane/ Gjilan town. He was attacked while walking down the main street towards the Municipal Building. He was found laying unconscious on the street with a large cut on his head by police, who transferred him to the Town Hospital. He was later transferred to Vranje, Serbia for further care.	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 01.11.2003 in Vitia/Vitina. An unknown male threatened and physically assaulted a K-Serbian female before fleeing the scene. The incident occurred in an ethnically mixed village of Mogila.	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 08.11.2003, a 70 year-old Serb man from Paralovo, Gjilan/Gnjilane, was assaulted by six people while working in his fields. He sustained head injuries and was taken to the Mitrovica Hospital. After he was badly beaten up, attackers put him in a bag , probably thinking he was dead, and threw him in a river .	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	Reported on 10.11.2003 but occurred on 08.11.2003 in Gjilan/Gnjilane unknown person(s) assaulted a K-Serbian male, and then stole his cattle . The victim sustained serious injuries and was hospitalized. On 15/11, a K-Albanian confessed his involvement in the incident and provided the names of his accomplices.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	On 19.11.2003 in Gjakovë/Dakovica an unknown K-Albanian male armed with a knife assaulted a K-Roma female and attempted to drag her into a forest . No injuries were reported.	K-Roma
Peje/Pec	In Pejë/Pec on 22.11.2003 a K-Bosniak off-duty uniformed KPS officer used tear-gas in self-defence after he was assaulted by a group of K-Albanian males. 2 K-Albanian males were arrested. No injuries were reported.	K-Bosniak
Mitrovica/a	Mitrovica/a North on 06.12.2003 three unknown persons, speaking Serbian language, assaulted a K-Albanian male and fled the scene. No injuries were	K-Albanian

	reported.	
Peje/Pec	On 10 December, a crowd of K-Albanian attacked K-Serbs who attempted to return to their houses in Kline/a.	K-Serbs
Mitrovice/a	In Mitrovice/a North, on 11.12.2003 three unknown K-Serbian males assaulted a K-Albanian male, kicking and hitting him with a metal fist in the face. The victim was hospitalized with face injuries. No arrests reported.	K-Albanian
Mitrovice/a	On 15.12.2003, two K-Albanians in a truck had lost their way and accidentally entered the K-Serb village of Baja/Banja where they threatened and assaulted by a group of about 20 K-Serb males.	K-Albanian
Mitrovice/a	On 19.12.2003 in Mitrovice/a two K-Serbian males assaulted and slapped one of two K-Albanian males who were crossing the Main Bridge on their way to their house in Mitrovice/a North. KFOR intervened and brought the situation under control. No injuries were reported.	K-Albanians
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 14.07.2003 in Vitia/Vitina - 1900hrs. Three unidentified K-Albanian males assaulted a K-Serbian male, causing him some injuries.	K-Serb
Mitrovice/a	On 17.07.2003 in Skenderaj/Srbica ten unknown K-Albanian teenagers assaulted a K-Serbian male while he was working in his field. The victim sustained some injuries and was hospitalized.	K-Serb
2004		
Peje/Pec	On 05.02.2004 in Gjkove/Djakovica two K-Albanian males assaulted a K-Egyptian male. No injuries or arrest were reported. The police believes the incident to be ethnically related.	K-Egyptian
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 26.02.2004 in Kamenice/a- 26/02. Ten K-Albanian secondary school students assaulted six K-Serbian students in an integrated high school for unknown reason. Two of the victims were hospitalized with minor injuries. None of the perpetrators was identified so far.	K- Serbs
Mitrovice/a	On 05.03.2004 in Mitrovice/a (S) three K-Albanian males verbally and physically assaulted a K-Serbian male travelling by train from Svinjare to Lesak. The victim sustained slight injuries and believes the incident was ethnically motivated.	K-Serb
Peje/Pec	On 12.03.2004 in Pejë/Pec a known K-Albanian male juvenile assaulted a K-Bosniak male juvenile and fled the scene.	K-Bosniak
Peje/Pec	In Vitomirice/a, on 01.04.2004 a K-Albanian male threatened to kill and assaulted a K-Bosniak male with a gun butt. No injuries were reported. Later, the perpetrator was arrested and the shotgun was found and confiscated from his house.	K-Bosniak
Mitrovice/a	On 20.04.2004 in Mitrovice/a South four K-Albanian males physically assaulted and stoned a K-Ashkaelia male. The victim received minor injuries and was hospitalized. The perpetrators and victim are neighbours and a conflict between the two families has existed for over two years, including physical assaults.	K-Ashkaelia

Stonings

Region	Description of the incident	Minority
Peje/Pec	On 07.01.2003 in Istog/k Unknown person(s) threw stones at a K-Egyptian's house causing a minor damage. The perpetrators also fired several shots in the air then fled the scene. No injuries were reported. The investigation continues.	K-Egyptian
Mitrovice/a	On 26.01.2003 in Vushtri/Vucitrn unknown person(s) stoned a bus carrying 70 K-Serbian IDPs and several Serbs from Serbia proper who intended to visit the Orthodox cemetery in the town center. Three windows were broken. No injuries were reported. The investigation continues.	K-Serbs
Peje/Pec	On 17.02.2003 in Klina unknown person(s) threw stones at a K-Serbian house in a village where return of K-Serbs had recently taken place. Two windows of the house were broken. No injuries were reported. The	K-Serb

	investigation continues.	
Mitrovice/a	On 17.02.2003 in Mitrovice/a three unknown youths stoned the Danish Refugee Council's bus transporting 52 K-Serbs . The windscreen was smashed but no injuries were reported. The investigation continues.	K-Serbs
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 24 .03.2003, a group of K-Albanian youths, lead by the person who was arrested but subsequently released for the grenade attack of 07.02.2003 in Viti/Vitina, celebrated the 1999 NATO intervention by burning old tires and shouting slogans in the Serb part of the village, creating public disorder and stoning vehicles with Serbian license passengers. One K-Serb was hit by a stone on the head .	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	At the beginning of March, rock throwing against K-Serb secondary school students at the multi-ethnic school compound in Kamenice/a was reported again. UNMIK called for a meeting with the school directors and the education department to stop the incidents.	K-Serbs
Prishtine/Pristina	On 15.04.2003 in Podujevë/o unknown person(s) stoned a K-Serbian convoy under KFOR escort. No damages or injuries were reported.	K-Serbs
Mitrovice/a	On 06.05.2003 in Mitrovice/a about 15 K-Albanian juveniles stoned a K-Serbian bus. No injuries but some broken windows were reported.	K-Serbs
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 10.05.2003 in Gjilan/Gnjilane a K-Albanian male threw a bottle at a K-Serbian car, passing through the ethnically mixed village of Cernica. No injuries but minor material damages reported. The investigation continues.	K-Serb
Prizren	On 11.05.2003 in Prizren an unknown motorist stopped and stoned 2 cars with Belgrade registration plates with 2 K-Bosniak males inside. No injuries but damages to the cars were reported.	K-Bosniaks
Mitrovice/a	On 25.05.2003 in Mitrovice/a (N) the house of a K-Gorani male KFOR employee (who is also Goranis representative of "Little Bosnia" in Northern Mitrovica) was stoned for the third time in two months .	K-Gorani
Prishtine/Pristina	On 29.05.2003 in Lip(l)jan a group of K-Albanian youngsters stoned an elderly K-Serbian female's house . The victim sustained minor injuries on her head. Small damage was also reported to the house.	K-Serb
Mitrovice/a	On 27.05.2003 in Vushtrri/Vucitrn several unknown persons stoned a K-Ashkaelia house and fled the scene.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovice/a	On 07.06.2003 in Vushtrri/Vucitrn several unidentified K-Albanian males stoned a K-Serbian male while he was working in a field. The victim sustained some injuries.	K-Serb
Mitrovice/a	On 14.06.2003 in Mitrovice/a several K-Albanian children stoned a K-Serbian bus in the ethnically mixed area of Suvi Do village. The UNMIK Police responded but could not intercept the perpetrators.	K-Serb
Prizren	On 18.06.2003 in Prizren unknown K-Albanian youngsters stoned a K-Serbian female at her house. The victim was hit but no injuries were reported. The investigation continues.	K-Serb
Mitrovice/a	On 20.06.2003 in Vushtrri/Vucitrn four K-Albanian males stoned several K-Serbs working in their fields. Later, they also vandalized a K-Serbian female's garden. UNMIK Police responded and arrested all perpetrators.	K-Serb
Prishtine/Pristina	On 28.06.2003 in Podujevë/o two unknown males stoned a K-Serbian bus breaking its windscreen. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 30.06.2003 in Kamenice/a unknown person threw a metal bar at a K-Serbian mini bus causing a minor injury to a K-Serbian female passenger. The passengers blocked the road in protest against the incident. Later, the Police and KFOR cleared the road and no further incidents were reported.	K-Serb
Gjilan/Gnjilane	On 07.07.2003 in Viti/Vitina unknown person(s) stoned a passing-by K-Serbian vehicle. A 15-year-old K-Serbian female passenger suffered injuries (broken jaw) and was transported to Vranje hospital in Serbia proper. <u>Another rock-throwing incident</u> took place in Mogila, a K-Serb man sustained injuries.	K-Serb

Mitrovica/a	In Vushtrri/Vucitrn, several unknown persons stoned a K-Ashkaelia house on 27 July 2003.	K-Ashkaelia
Mitrovica/a	In Zvecan on 01.08.2003 unknown juveniles (allegedly K-Albanians) stoned K-Serbian workers building houses for IDPs. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Mitrovica/a	On 29.08.2003 in Skenderaj/Srbica unknown persons stoned a K-Serbian bus under KFOR escort, breaking a window. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Mitrovica/a	On 11.09.2003 in Mitrovica/a (N) K-Serbian males stoned 4 K-Albanian teenagers who attempted to cross the main bridge to the Serbian part of the town. They turned back after KPS patrol intervened.	K-Albanian
Mitrovica/a	In Vushtrri/Vucitrn on 18.09.2003 a K-Albanian male was detained by a KFOR patrol for throwing stones at K-Serbian houses and threatening KFOR soldiers. He was handed over to KPS and released after questioning.	K-Serb
Mitrovica/a	Unknown person(s) threw stones at the house of a K-Albanian female in the area of the Three Towers in Mitrovica/a North on 31.10.2003 and broke three windows.	K-Albanian
Peje/Pec	Five K-Albanians attempted to stone K-Serbs who were visiting the Orthodox cemetery in the village of Belica, in Istog/k on 01.11.1003. A KFOR patrol managed to prevent the incident.	K – Serbs
Mitrovica/a	On 08 November, four unknown K-Serb males threw stones at a K-Albanian vehicle on the main bridge and broke the rear window.	K-Albanian
Prishtine/ Pristina	UNMIK Police in Obilic/q reported that on 06 November 03, when a UN bus was providing transport between Gracanica and Milosevo/Milloshve village, some children pelted stones on the bus . A window was broken, but no injury was reported.	K-Serb
Prizren	On 13 November, a Go and See Visit for seven K-Serbian IDPs took place under KFOR and UNMIK Police escort to the village of Mushtishte/Mustiste. Upon arrival, approximately 150 K-Albanians attempted to block the convoy and subsequently stoned it . The windows of two vehicles were broken and a UNHCR staff member sustained minor injuries. Just before the visit, an explosion was heard and subsequently, KFOR found four hand grenades in two locations.	K-Serb IDPs
Prizren	The Rahovec/Orahovac – Zvecan bus shuttle was stoned on 14 November 2003 in Malisheve, for the first time after a long period without any incidents. One window was smashed but no passengers were hurt.	K – Serbs
Mitrovica/a	On 14.11.2003 in Mitrovica/a about 60 K-Serbs gathered in a protest against a group of K-Albanian males wearing traditional Albanian white hats and attempting to cross the Main Bridge into the Northern part of town. Small groups of K-Albanian males gathered on the Southern side of the bridge. Several stones were thrown from both sides. UNMIK Police and KFOR intervened. No injuries reported. Additional preventive security measures were introduced. Press and camera crews were present on both sides. <u>On 15.11.2003</u> about 10 K-Serbs gathered again close to the Main Bridge. As a preventive measure, UNMIK Police requested KFOR to prevent K-Albanians from proceeding to the main bridge during the gathering.	K – Serbs/ K-Albanians
Prishtine/ Pristina	The UN bus connecting Babin Most to Gracanica was stoned in the village of Stankovac on 14 November. A window was broken.	K – Serbs
Prishtine/ Pristina	On 15 and 16 November, the Serb Community Centre in the YU building in Prishtine/Pristina city was stoned .	K – Serbs
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	In the third week of November, the school bus transporting K-Serb students was stoned in the village Kopernice/Koprivnica. KFOR and CIVPOL subsequently increased their patrols in the village.	K – Serbs
Mitrovica/a	Unknown suspects have thrown stones at a K-Bosniak female's house in Mitrovica/a North on 25.11.2003, causing damages to the side wall, roof and window. The victim feels under pressure to sell her house.	K-Bosniak

Prizren	For the fifth time in 2003, the UNMIK Bus Shuttle Rahovec/Orahovac – Zvecan transporting K-Serbs was stoned on 12 December, this time in in Astrazub village. No report of serious damages to the bus or passengers.	K-Serbs
Mitrovica	On 12 December, an unknown person threw a stone at a K-Albanian car passing the main bridge into the North, causing minor damage to the car and minor injuries to a K-Albanian female passenger.	K-Albanian
Prizren	In Kacanik on 16.12.2003 three unknown under aged juveniles stoned a bus belonging to a Serbian Bus Company and ferrying 24 K-Serbian passengers from Belgrade to Strpce. No injuries but some damages were reported.	K-Serbs
Mitrovica	On 17.12.2003 in Vushtrri/Vucitrn unknown suspect(s) stoned a house of a K-Serbian male damaging a window. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 22.12.2003 two buses transporting K-Serbs have been stoned by youths.	K-Serbs
2004		
Mitrovica	On 17.01.2004, five K-Serb juveniles stoned a K-Albanian male passing by on bicycle close to main bridge in Mitrovica/a North. No injuries were reported. The victim reported though, that within two weeks, stones had been thrown at him three times and once his arm was wounded.	K-Albanian
Mitrovica	On 18.01.2004 in Skenderaj/Srbica three known K-Albanian males threw stones at a passing-by K-Serbian male's vehicle causing minor damages. No injuries and arrested were reported	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 31.01.2004 in Mitrovica/a a group of K-Albanian juveniles were detained for throwing stones at a K-Serbian male. They were released later after questioning and apologizing to the victim.	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 06.02.2004 in Mitrovica/a (N) unknown person(s) threw stones at a K-Bosniak house damaging the roof. No injuries were reported. The victim has allegedly been the victim of a series of attacks against the property. After the riots in March, the family left the house, one family member being displaced in Mitrovica/a South, others went for family reunification to Norway.	K-Bosniak
Mitrovica	On Mitrovica/a Bridge, on 06.02.2004 about 40 K-Albanian and K-Serbian youths stoned each other from the opposite ends of the bridge. UNMIK Police responded and calmed the situation down. No injuries were reported. Two K-Albanian males were arrested.	K-Albanians/K-Serbs
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On 10.02.2004 in Gjilan/Gnjilane about 15 K-Albanian males prevented a group of 3 K-Serbian IDPs from visiting their village by blocking the road and threatening to stone them . On 11/02, KFOR arrested a K-Albanian male leader and handed him over to UNMIK Police for further investigation.	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 18.02.2004 in Vushtrri/Vucitrn two unknown K-Albanian juveniles stoned a "Danish Refugee Council" bus with 6 K-Serbian passengers on board breaking several windows. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 19.02.2004 in Skenderaj/Srbica unknown persons stoned a K-Serbian truck. The driver sustained minor injuries and the vehicle was slightly damaged. In a separate incident, unknown person(s) threw stones at a K-Serbian car, causing minor damages. No injuries were reported.	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 22.02.2004 in Skenderaj/Srbica – 22/02. Unknown person(s) stoned a K-Serbian male's vehicle causing some damages.	K-Serb
Mitrovica	On 14.03.2004 in Mitrovica/a (N) three K-Serbian boys threw stones at a K-Albanian male motorist. No injuries but minor damages to the vehicle were reported.	K-Albanian
Peje/Pec	Klinavac, between 19 and 25.04. Unknown persons threw stones and fired weapons against the K-Egyptian houses in the hamlet of Klinavac. Similar incidents allegedly already occurs at the end of 2003 and led two persons to move towards the centre of the village where they feel safer.	K-Egyptian

Appendix 2

Summary of security incidents during involving minorities during the civil unrest 15-20 March 2004

15 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	A 19 year old K-Serb was seriously injured in a drive-by shooting in Caglavica, a K-Serb enclave adjacent to the main road connecting Prishtine/Pristina and Skopje, FYROM.

16 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	In protest against the shooting incident of 15 March, K-Serbs in Caglavica blocked the main road from Prishtine/Pristina to Skopje, FYROM and stoned KFOR and UNMIK police.
Mitrovice/ a	The other 'triggering incident' was the story reported on Kosovo media of three K-Albanian children who had drowned in a river in Mitrovice/a. According to a boy who survived, they had been chased into the river by K-Serbs.

17 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	The inter-ethnic clashes were most severe in Prishtine/Pristina town and the village of Caglavica, 4 km from the town, as well as in Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje: Approximately 1,000 K-Serbs gathered to protest against the shooting incident of 15 March in the village of Caglavica. The demonstration prompted a K-Albanian protest of approximately 1,500 persons in Prishtina/Pristina town, which at first was peaceful. Later, the K-Albanian protesters attempted to establish roadblocks and became violent, then proceeded towards Caglavica to confront the K-Serbs. KFOR, SPU and Police kept both crowds separated, however, some K-Albanians managed to penetrate to various locations. Later, a number of K-Serbian houses in Caglavica were attacked and burned by a mob of about 2,000 K-Albanians. Approximately 100 civilian casualties were reported. The violent protestors then moved to the YU-Programme building in Prishtina/Pristina (a K-Serbian enclave). A number of vehicles were set on fire. At approximately 0001 hrs, the crowd again attacked the location using small arms, petrol bombs and stones, broke into K-Serb apartments and attacked and physically assaulted K-Serbs inside. KFOR and SPU later gained control of the building and evacuated people. In Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje, a K-Albanian crowd attacked K-Serb houses, putting several of them on fire. During the riot, a K-Serbian male was beaten to death and several others were injured. The K-Serbs ambulanta, a local post office and a school building were also set on fire. K-Serbs effectively defended the Orthodox Church against the attacks. In Lip(l)jan, a K-Albanian crowd (strength not reported) gathered but was effectively contained by Police. Several K-Serbian houses were set on fire. A K-Albanian was injured during the riots and died the following day in hospital. In Shtime/Stimlje, a K-Serb house was set on fire.
Mitrovice/	On the first day, Mitrovice/a town was the centre of inter-ethnic violence in the region:

a	Following the report about the drowned K-Albanian children allegedly being chased into the river by K-Serbs, in the morning of 17 March, up to 5,000 K-Albanians demonstrated – peacefully at first - in the Southern part of Mitrovice/a town. K-Serbs quickly gathered on the northern side of the bridge and stone throwing from both sides began. A group of about 200 K-Albanians forcibly entered the Main Bridge, throwing stones as well as breaking barricades, heading to the “Three Tower” area where the stone throwing continued. At the river, K-Albanians shot from the Southern side at the Serbs on the Northern side, who fired back. Four K-Albanians were shot dead and dozens wounded. Throughout the day, explosions were heard on both sides of the river. In the afternoon, the K-Albanians had been pushed back to the Southern side of the river and the police and SPU had reasserted control over the situation. According to the initial information, 4 K-Serbs were killed and about 50 were injured. Among K-Albanians, 4 persons were killed and about 160 were injured. In Vushtrri/Vucitrn municipality, six K-Serbian houses were set on fire in Banjska and Slatina villages. Three victims were injured and hospitalized in Mitrovice/a (N) Hospital.
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	The intensity of the violence was the strongest in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Ferizaj/Urosevac Municipalities, where the K-Serb community actually had been well integrated before: In Gjilan/Gnjilane town, the riots started with about 2,500 K-Albanians gathering in the centre of town and stoning UNMIK Regional HQ, breaking several windows. From there, the riots soon spread to the K-Serb neighbourhoods in town. During the day, 9 K-Serbian houses were set on fire in the vicinity of the K-Serbian Church, one K-Serbian male was caught and killed by the crowds outside his house. His mother, also beaten up, died a few days later in hospital. In the evening, the K-Serb village of Silovo where most K-Serbs from Gjilan/Gnjilane town had evacuated to during the day, also came under attack, but KFOR managed to stop the mob heading towards this village. The Serbian Orthodox church in the centre of Ferizaj/Urosevac, guarded by KFOR, came under heavy attack by about 2,500 K-Albanians throwing stones, bricks, petrol bombs and grenades. Several explosions and automatic gunfire were heard. In Vitina/Vitina, a K-Albanian crowd went on a rampage setting 4 K-Serbian houses on fire and damaging 4 K-Serbian cars. In Kamenice/a, about 500 K-Albanians gathered and attacked various K-Serbian locations with stones. Two K-Serbian cars were also destroyed. In Shtërpçë/Strpce municipality, two K-Serbs, a father and son, died of gunshot wounds.
Prizren	Prizren town, known for its multicultural nature for years, was the centre of violence against K-Serbs in the region: In Prizren town, around 1700hrs, about 2,000 K-Albanians staged a violent protest outside the UNMIK Regional HQ and 3-4 houses close by were burned. At night, the Orthodox Seminary and 2 Orthodox churches were also set on fire in the town centre, as well as three Orthodox chapels/churches in the area. Rahovec/Orahovac: A K-Serb house was looted and then set on fire, two of its inhabitants were injured. Several other houses were damaged.
Peje/Pec	Although sporadic violence erupted throughout the region, the most severe attack against K-Serbs took place in the return site of Bellopoje/Belo Polje: In the center of Pejë/Pec, about 500 K-Albanians gathered next to the UNMIK Regional HQ. The rioting group of K-Albanians grew quickly during the day and attacked the K-Serbian returnee site in the village of Bellopoje/Belo Polje. KFOR evacuated approximately 200 K-Serbs. Twelve of them were injured by K-Albanians during the evacuation. About 15 K-Serbian houses were looted and set on fire. During this incident, a K-Albanian male was shot and killed by an UNMIK International Police officer after a direct attack against her.

	K-Albanians unsuccessfully tried to set the Orthodox monastery of Decan/Deçani on fire, in the process of which nine K-Albanians were shot and injured. After Police and KFOR had evacuated four elderly K-Serb females from the Orthodox Church in Gjakovë/Dakovica, the Church was burned down. A crowd blocked roads inside the town of Istok/g with garbage bins, large vehicles and wooden electric poles.
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18 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	On 18 March, severe inter-ethnic violence continued in Prishtine/Pristina town and Caglavica, but also intensified in Lip(l)jan and spread to the Municipalities of Podujevo/o and Obiliq/c: After a quiet period in the early morning hours, K-Albanians in Prishtina/Pristina, resumed their rioting at 0817 hrs by blocking the Prishtine/Pristina-Skopje highway. They started with 50 school children and reached the strength of about 1,500 persons throughout the day. UNMIK Police, SPU and KFOR defended the approach to Caglavica village, using tear gas. At around 1600 hrs, KFOR prevented an attempt to break through to Caglavica village. Four K-Albanian males were injured by warning shots and hospitalized. At 0929 hrs, K-Albanian juveniles repeated their attacks against the evacuated YU-Programme building in the City but were repeatedly rebuffed by SPU. In the evening hours the Serb Orthodox Church in Prishtine/Pristina town was burned down. Automatic gunfire was also heard in the area. The Serbian priest, 5 K-Serb families from the area around the church were evacuated. In Podujevo Municipality, the Orthodox Church in Besiane was set ablaze and a house in Braine burnt. In Obiliq/c Municipality, an Orthodox Church, numerous K-Serbian houses and apartment blocks were set on fire and destroyed. The minority village of Plementina (6 km NE of Obilic) was besieged by numerous K-Albanians. In the afternoon, in Lip(l)jan about 1,000 K-Albanians besieged the Police Station, and an unidentified explosive device went off behind the Police Station and up to 15 explosions were reported in the area. At 1850 hrs about 1,000 K-Albanians assembled again in the town and at 2020 hrs, a monument was destroyed. A K-Serbian male, whose house was on fire, shot and injured a K-Albanian female. Two K-Albanian males and a K-Serbian male were found dead. Eight K-Serbs houses were set on fire. In Stimlje, a K-Serbian house, abandoned on the previous day, was set on fire as well as the Orthodox Church. Another 4 K-Serbian houses were looted and set ablaze additionally.
Mitrovica/ a	Clashes continued throughout the day: From 1000 hrs, crowds again began to mount on the Southern side of the Main Bridge in Mitrovica/a. At 1305 hrs, several Molotov cocktails were thrown into KFOR-guarded Orthodox Church perimeter in the South. The Church was set on fire as well as two neighboring K-Serb houses. The local Fire Brigade extinguished the house fires but not the Church, which was severely damaged. The crowd proceeded to the K-Serb village of Svinjare where they put several houses on fire. After the villagers had been evacuated, all Serb owned buildings were looted and burnt and livestock and animals slaughtered. At 1746 hrs, 2 K-Serbian male dead bodies were found in the village.

	In Vushtrri/Vucitrn, two K-Albanian mobs converged to attack the K-Ashkaelia neighborhood in the late afternoon hours. One crowd burned the Orthodox Church and desecrated the cemetery, then joined another mob which was looting K-Ashkaelia houses. After the evacuation of the K-Ashkaelia population, 67 houses were burned. At 1245 hrs, about 2,000 protestors, mostly school children, gathered and started their movement towards the Devic Monastery in Skenderaj/Srbica. After five K-Serbian nuns had been evacuated from the area, the Monastery was put on fire.
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	K-Serbs in Gjilan/Gnjilane and Ferizaj/Urosevac remained under severe attack on the second day of the riots: Around noon, about 3,000 K-Albanians had gathered in the center of Gjilan/Gnjilane and its vicinity. Another nine K-Serb houses were burnt. In the late afternoon, six people were injured by hand grenade explosions in Gjilan/Gnjilane town and in Cernica village, a K-Serbian cemetery was vandalized. About 1,500 K-Albanians went on a rampage in Ferizaj/Urosevac. All K-Serb homes in town were looted after the inhabitants had been evacuated. The Orthodox cemetery in town was vandalized. Three Orthodox Churches in the villages of Varosh, Talinovac and Softaj were burned and their cemeteries vandalized. In Vitia/Vitina, a crowd of about 300 K-Albanians set 10 K-Serbian houses on fire and looted many more. In Kamenice/a three K-Serb houses were set on fire.
Prizren	Around noon, the mostly abandoned K-Serbian district of Podkalaia in Prizren town was on fire again as groups of looters easily passed through a KPS patrol. At night, an adjacent building to the Orthodox Church in Berjake/Brnjaca village, Rahovec/Orahovac Municipality, was set on fire and partly destroyed.
Peje/Pec	On the second day, violence continued in Bellopoje/Belo Polje and spread to Kline/a Municipality: In Pejë/Pec, two houses were also set on fire in the area of UNMIK Regional HQ. At 1800 hrs, at the Bellopoje/Belo Polje return site, looting continued in abandoned K-Serbian properties. Several new outbreaks of fires were also observed. At 0237 hrs, sporadic shootings were heard in Gorazdevac village (6 km SE of Peje/Pec). At 1310 hrs, about 500 K-Albanians attempted to march into K-Serbian Bica and Grabac villages in Kline/a Municipality but were prevented by KFOR and UNMIK Police. At 1230 hrs, KFOR evacuated 35 K-Serbs by helicopters from the villages. At 2030 hrs, 4 K-Serbian houses were put on fire in Bica village. At 2200 hrs, sporadic shootings were heard in several villages. Around 1344 about 100 K-Albanians started to march towards the Orthodox Monastery of Decan/Decani but were kept from proceeding at 1545 hrs after Municipal authorities' and UNMIK Police intervention. Following the destruction of an Orthodox Church in Gjakove/Dakovica, the rioters removed the debris with trucks and trailers. Two houses were also reported to be set ablaze. About 5,000 K-Albanians participated in the events. After a bomb threat, an explosion occurred at 0214 hrs in the Orthodox Church in Baja village, Istok/g Municipality.

19 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	In the evening, K-Albanian juveniles repeatedly attempted to loot the abandoned K-Serbian properties in the YU Programme building and in the Technical Faculty area of Prishtine/Pristina town, but were prevented by KPS. A K-Serbian house in Fushë Kosovë/Kosovo Polje was set on fire. In the morning hours, several recently abandoned K-Serb houses in Obiliq/c were set on fire. A group of K-Serbs attacked K-Albanian houses in the boundary area of Besiane, Podujevo Municipality, and set them on fire. No injuries were reported. Also, an abandoned K-Serb house 20 km SE of Besiane was set on fire. In Lip(l)jan, sporadic house fires were reported. After all K-Serbs from Shtime/Stim(l)je had been evacuated from the town, three K-Serb houses were set on fire.
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	On the night of 18-19 March, unknown person(s) threw a hand grenade into the house of the local Municipal President of Novo Brdo, who is K-Serbian. No injuries but material damages were reported. About 100 K-Albanians gathered in Gjilan/Gnjilane and set a K-Serbian house on fire.
Prizren	Two K-Albanian were arrested after they set on fire a K-Serb house in Prizren , injured with a knife the K-Serb female owner of the house and robbed her of 325 euro. At night, two K-Serbian owned stables were set on fire in the village of Mushnikova/Musnikovo..
Peje/Pec	A K-Egyptian house in Peje/Pec municipality whose owner resides in Switzerland was looted.
Mitrovice/ a	The Orthodox Churches in the K-Serbian village of Priluzje, Vushtrri/Vucitrn Municipality, and in Sjkenderaj/Srbica were set on fire.

20 March

Region	Description of the incident
Prishtine/ Pristina	In Fushe Kosove/Kosovo Polje Municipality, an unknown person fired several shots in the air before setting a K-Roma barn on fire. Three K-Serb houses were set on fire in Obiliq/c Municipality.
Gjilan/ Gnjilane	2 abandoned K-Serbian houses were set on fire in Gjilan/Gnjilane during the night of 19-20 March and on the evening of 20 March one K-Serbian abandoned house in Novoberde/Novo Brdo Municipality.
Prizren	At night, an explosion completely destroyed an abandoned Orthodox Church near Zivinane village, Prizren Municipality. No injuries were reported.
Mitrovice/ a	The two remaining buildings of the Devic Orthodox Monastery in Skernderaj/Srbica which was burned down on 18 March, were also set on fire.