

Kosovo Chronicle 2 – Issues of Human Security in Kosovo

by CRDP

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(Findings from the consulting meeting with local stakeholders in Prishtina on April 8th 2013)

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We understand conflict as one of the greatest inhibitors to progress and human development. Not only does it lead to wide-scale destruction and destabilized communities, it almost always involves mass violations of human rights. Today, economic growth remains stagnant, unemployment numbers are at nearly 50%¹ and ethnic tensions continue to threaten peace and stability in Kosovo and the region. Most studies that examine these problems do so from a macro-level perspective. What we are trying to find out here is to look at how these issues manifest themselves at the local level, more precisely how they affect day to day life of men and women of a different ethnic background who struggle for their wellbeing and cohabitate to each other. How these welfare problems affect their lives and diminish their fears.

- *Lots of families in Kosovo feel insecure because they are dependent on seasonal incomes from their unsupported agro-culture activity. Therefore, lack of electricity and water supply make them insecure because their food reserves are exposed to climate factors which cannot be controlled in absence of electricity and water.*²

Having half of population less than 25 years old, the youth represents both the potential wealth of the Kosovo society for accelerated development and, at the same time, a major potential risk if it is not approached adequately. Civil Society in Kosovo has always had a special role to play in addressing this threat and ensuring that the rights of mostly marginalized and minorities in particular are defended. Women and youth consequently are the most marginalized.

- *Inequality between men and women is based on economic factors like unemployment among the women which is much higher than among men, for different reasons, including patriarchal mentality. Then it results with violence against women, and not reported cases from women themselves, because they feel more secured tolerating violence rather than living alone which can be much more risky.*³

¹European Commission (2011). Kosovo 2011 Progress Report. Brussels: European Commission, 25

² 1st informant

³ 2nd informant

The crisis of identity and unsecure borders on the other hand remain the biggest challenge for Kosovo society after the high percentage of unemployment. Instead of positioning and speaking about needs and common interests, two opposing sides, the Albanians and Serbs, have positioned themselves diametrically against each other, since both groups have radically different ideas about the best way to live, they are likely to stress the importance of very different things and to have vastly different or incompatible goals. The permanent provocations in northern Mitrovica present the major challenge to sustainable peace in Kosovo, adding the corruption, high rate of unemployment and lack of free and fair elections. Addressing the fears from both conflicting sides in Mitrovica will be our next approach on human security. However, external threats in addition to those internal, remain attentive.

- *External threat is still present for citizens of Kosovo. For example, declarations of actual prime minister of Serbia who declares that they have lost many times Kosovo but they have returned it again, makes people feeling threatened, knowing the history and experiences in the past.*⁴

The idea of human security is directly linked to the right to development. Hunger and poverty are the main sources of insecurity for a considerable portion of mankind. Underdevelopment begets violence, which, in turn, hampers the development process in all its aspects. Furthermore, deepening inequalities within societies and among nations is a recipe to engender institutional instabilities and, as a consequence, to human insecurity. It is, therefore, by turning our attention to the field of economic and social development that we can break this vicious circle.

- *Education is also gives insecurity feeling. Students are focused on law faculties and economic faculties, therefore education faculties are full of students who can't gratify the criteria of other faculty's and that results with unprepared teachers in elementary and high schools. Knowing this, people are interested to send their children in private schools which are very expensive. This situation gives a new premise of having access to education: you have access in education if you are in good economic conditions.*⁵
- *Most of the people in Kosovo feel safe in their families. This is a result of losing faith in the institutions and public life. Every day society is getting more isolated into small groups (families).*⁶

Nonetheless, to avoid citizen dependency and to promote domestic participatory processes, the key guiding principles of development policy should have been partnership, local ownership and participation. As Kaldor advocates, "people who live in zones of insecurity are the best source of intelligence. Thus communication, consultation and dialogue are essential tools for both development and security, not simply to win hearts and minds but in order to gain knowledge and understanding."⁷ In particular, the exclusion of sensitive groups, such as former combatants encouraged them to engage in spoiling behaviour, which threatened to undermine progress. Similarly, as experienced in many post-conflict settings, the exclusion of groups with special needs can lead to unintended consequences, where "spoilers oppose the peaceful settlement for whatever reason, from within or (usually) outside the peace process, and who use violence or other means to disrupt the process in pursuit of their aims."⁸

- *Workers are suppressed in absence of syndicates which can't exist in micro enterprises with 1-5 workers, therefore the law on labor is not respected.*⁹

Excluded groups can easily use "the peace process as a means of gaining recognition and legitimacy, gaining time, gaining material benefit, or avoiding sanctions."¹⁰

- *Pensions are problematic in Kosovo. There is no specific scheme or law that regulates all the pensions. They are divided in specific law or subordinate legal acts; not all the categories are included.*¹¹

Nonetheless, as the thinking on human security grows, various critiques have questioned its meaning, scope and its political and moral implications. The main conceptual criticism concerns its lack of precision: as a concept, it is too broad to consider responses to threats, it lacks a concise research agenda, which is complicated by its inter-disciplinarity and inter-sectorality.¹²

⁴ 3rd informant

⁵ 4th informant

⁶ 5th informant

⁷ Kaldor, Mary, *Human Security: Reflections on Globalization and Intervention*, at p. 189.

⁸ Newman, Edward and Oliver Richmond (eds.), *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers During Conflict Resolution*, United Nations University Press, Tokyo, 2006, at p. 4.

⁹ 7th Informant

¹⁰ Newman, Edward and Oliver Richmond (eds.), *Challenges to Peacebuilding: Managing Spoilers During Conflict Resolution*, at p. 4.

¹¹ 7th informant

¹² Adem Beha and Gezim Visoka, *Human Security as 'Ethnic Security' in Kosovo*, *Human Security Perspectives*, Volume 7 (2010), Issue 1

In order to make human security a reality in Kosovo, taken into considerations its broad scope of factors which affect the subject of human security, there should be a sufficient political will and commitment from all parties engaged to put people first and treat them equally despite their ethnic, religious or linguistic background.

- *Economic model of the Kosovo is another problem. In lack of safety and support given from state people are not encouraged to try something innovative (in business for example). There is no basic social support from institutions which makes people unsecure on thinking for something innovative, therefore enterprises of Kosovo are mainly micro.*¹³

Economic development and education are the keys to improvement of people's welfare in Kosovo, and while this can take some times until results became vivid, it will also simultaneously affect the political and security agendas and both national and international actors needs to work hand in hand.