



BORN
BALKAN
INVESTIGATIVE
REPORTING
NETWORK KOSOVO

**ANNUAL
REPORT
2016**

Contents

03

BIRN Kosovo's mission

37

Training and media development

04

Method and Approach

42

Awards

05

Operations

43

Partners and donors

06

Diary of impact from BIRN stories

44

Funding in 2016

12

BIRN Kosovo - map of operations

47

Challenges ahead

35

Monitoring & Advocating

48

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As an independent, non-governmental organization, BIRN Kosovo exists to provide momentum to the democratic transition in Kosovo by promoting accountability, rule of law and policy reform.

BIRN Kosovo's mission

As an independent, non-governmental organization, BIRN Kosovo exists to provide momentum to the democratic transition in Kosovo by promoting accountability, rule of law and policy reform.

BIRN Kosovo's vision

After starting with fewer than five staff members, BIRN Kosovo has since evolved into a comprehensive media organization, employing journalists and editors, administrative and technical staff in the production of high-quality investigative and analytical reporting.

BIRN Kosovo now fields a team of around 52 full-time professionals as well as 16 local and international contributors that work in the development and implementation of on-going programs.

The main purpose of BIRN Kosovo as an independent, non-governmental organization is to contribute to keeping an eye on the implementation of the democratic transition process, as well as on the reforms in justice and policy by promoting transparency and accountability.

BIRN Kosovo's approach is to combine its projects with those of the regional BIRN Network with a view to long-term sustainability of results and institutions.

BIRN Kosovo in particular aims to be the watchdog of public institutions, supporting their reform and their path towards meeting the criteria and standards of the European Union.

In addition, through the production of fair, balanced and accurate TV debates and training of youth on argumentation and debating skills, BIRN aims to promote and encourage a culture of debate in Kosovo.

BIRN's vision is to secure its position as the premier Kosovo investigative and analytical journalism organization, addressing the need for objective, quality, sustainable reporting on the country's many challenges in politics, economics and EU integration.

BIRN KOSOVO

Method and Approach

Journalism that acts as a watchdog

All of BIRN Kosovo's outputs have an underlying objective in common – holding the powerful accountable. Whether by hard-hitting interviews, challenging TV debates, online and printed investigations based on documents that unveil corruption or face leaders with their own promises systematically yearly, we aim to build a culture of media oversight in Kosovo through investigative and watchdog journalism.

Journalism that operates in the field

BIRN Kosovo's 52 staff and contributors are drawn from experienced investigative journalists, civil society activists, researchers and professional court monitors that are spread throughout Kosovo municipalities. Our monitoring team covering courts and public services covers 27 municipalities. BIRN is the only media outlet in Kosovo that does municipal and electoral debates by leaving Prishtina and reporting from 35 municipalities, offering the public the opportunity to pose questions to their leaders. Emails, phone calls and daily walk-in visits from citizens are powerful sources of information, on which most investigations are based. It is our belief that the best way to offer accurate and fair information is to be as close to the people who are affected by that story as possible.

Journalism that is engaged and affects change

Today, a good journalist does not simply report what happens, but also fights for a better tomorrow. We believe it is not enough to report on corruption or vote rigging if other institutions do not take action after our reporting. Frustrated by the indifference of local institutions to

intervene about matters we report, we have a team of legal professionals who file cases to the prosecution, holding evidence that we have collected through our investigative reporters and court monitors. Our staff is also trained in election monitoring. This is what we call engaged journalism that shapes public opinion about the kind of state we want Kosovo to become. BIRN affects change through the high credibility of its media outlets, which reached about 155,068 viewers for Life in Kosovo and 156,383 for Justice in Kosovo, 8,079,472 page views for all of BIRN's outlets, and more than 2,000,000 unique visitors to all outlets, including our online investigative portal. BIRN Kosovo's methods of professional reporting, debate and in-depth analysis are envisaged to create change in society without harming the accuracy and fairness of the story.

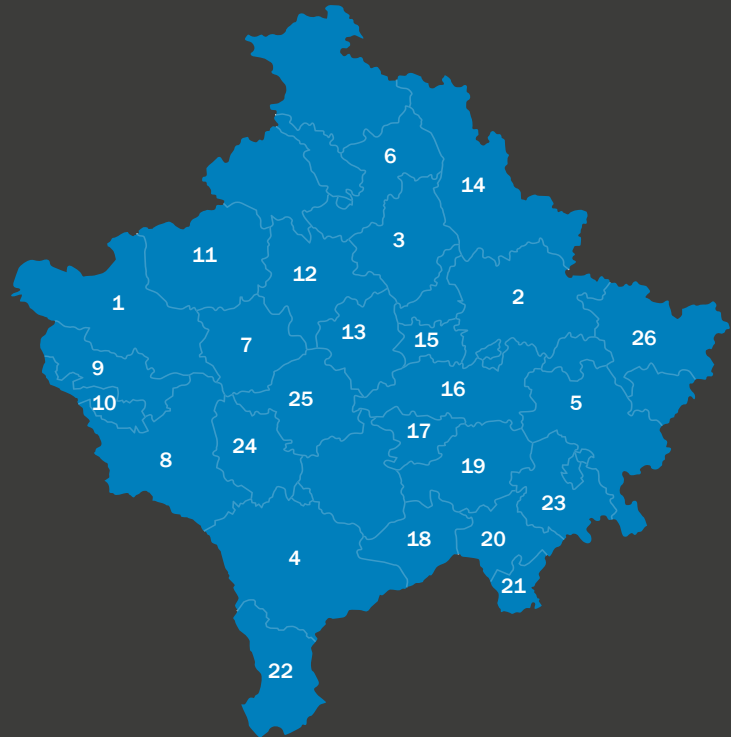
Journalism that trains for excellence

Since 2005, BIRN Kosovo, in partnership with Internews Kosova and BIRN Hub, has trained more than 1,000 journalists, court monitors, researchers, civil society activists, and officials of public institutions in Kosovo. This is done through on-the-job training and workshops, in news and investigative reporting, TV production skills, document-based research and training for court and public service monitoring, including for ethnicities and minorities. Building media capacities to deliver professional journalism remains a necessity in Kosovo, which has not only the youngest population in Europe but also the need to improve the quality of education. BIRN Kosovo is a hub for innovative and quality journalism – which has cemented our position as a trendsetter in Kosovo's media landscape.

BIRN KOSOVO

Operations

Location covered by Monitors of Court and
Municipal Services



- | | | |
|---|---|--|
| 1 Peja
(Basic Court, Court of Appeals and
Municipal services) | 10 Junik
(Municipal services) | 19 Ferizaj
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 2 Prishtina
(Basic Court, Supreme Court and
Municipal services) | 11 Istog
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 20 Kacanik
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 3 Vushtrri
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 12 Skenderaj
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 21 H. Elez
(Municipal services) |
| 4 Prizren
(Basic Court and Municipal
services) | 13 Drenas
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 22 Dragash
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 5 Gjilan
(Basic Court and Municipal
services) | 14 Podujeve
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 23 Viti
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 6 Mitrovica
(Basic Court and Municipal
services) | 15 Fushë Kosovë
(Municipal services branch) | 24 Rahovec
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 7 Klina
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 16 Lipjan
(Municipal Court branch and
Municipal services) | 25 Malisheve
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 8 Gjakova
(Basic Court and Municipal
services) | 17 Shtime
(Municipal services) | 26 Kamenica
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) |
| 9 Deçan
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | 18 Shterpce
(Basic Court branch and Municipal
services) | |

Diary of impact from BIRN stories

JAN
2016

On January 15th, a disciplinary case was opened against Judge Elmaze Syka for allowing a prisoner to leave prison on the same day he arrived there due to a technical error.

On January 17th, a case of a teacher physically abusing his student was published on KALLXO.com.¹ The report encouraged rule of law actors to act and as a result the case was filed to the prosecution by the police.

On January 17th, KALLXO.com published an article based on a citizen's complaint about the presence of stray dogs in his neighborhood.²

On January 20th, following BIRN's reporting, the police started investigating a case where the Head of the Emergency Hospital in the Municipality of Suhareka reported that a protocol book containing personal data of the patients was stolen.³

On January 27th, KALLXO.com reported on a volcanic rock in the north of Kosovo that was being exploited by a usurper, even though another person had a license for access to this rock.⁴

On January 29th, after a citizen's report, KALLXO.com reported on the problems that women encounter in inheriting property.⁵

On January 31st, after a citizen's report, KALLXO.com revealed that a decorative pole, which was supposed to be placed in the Zahir Pajaziti Boulevard, had never been built even though the municipality of Prishtina had paid 14,000 euro for it.⁶

On February 11th, a case was submitted to the Basic Prishtina Prosecution after KALLXO.com reported on water company problems for which the main regional water supplier was involved.⁷

On February 12th, after a citizen's report in February, KALLXO.com revealed that Albert Kurtulaj, an assembly member of LDK in the municipality of Deçan, was employed in the Ministry of Culture (also run by LDK).⁸

On February 22nd, BIRN reported about evidence from the massacre in Krusha e Madhe that was destroyed. The case was sent to the Special Prosecution for further investigation.⁹

On February 22nd, after a citizen's report, KALLXO.com revealed that secret files of phone recordings were leaked by the Kosovo Police.¹⁰

FEB
2016

1. <http://kallxo.com/nxenesi-nderpret-mesimin-ankohet-se-e-rrahu-arsimtarja/>
2. <http://kallxo.com/qytetaret-te-shqetesuar-nga-qente-endacake/>
3. <http://kallxo.com/vidhen-te-dhenat-e-pacienteve-ne-urgjencen-e-suharekes/>
4. <http://kallxo.com/2240155-2/>
5. <http://kallxo.com/drejtesia-ne-kosove-per-te-drejte-mohuar-te-gruas/>

6. <http://kallxo.com/14-mije-euro-per-gypin-qe-mungon/>
7. <http://kallxo.com/jnk/jeta-ne-kosove-lufta-per-uj/>
8. <http://kallxo.com/asamblisti-i-ldk-se-punesohet-ne-ministri/>
9. <http://kallxo.com/jnk/jeta-ne-kosove-lufta-per-uj/>
10. <http://kallxo.com/asamblisti-i-ldk-se-punesohet-ne-ministri/>

MAR

2016

On March 1st, after receiving a report from a citizen, KALLXO.com revealed that a truck loaded with documents from the Palace of Justice was stopped at one of the border points while trying to leave Kosovo.¹¹

On March 10th, a case related to the death of a heating worker in Malisheve that remained unsolved, was sent to the Basic Prosecution in Gjakova.¹²

On March 11th, a case related to the potential failed attempt of the Notary System to detect the validity of data was filed. During the program, work ethics in the Notary System were discussed; whether the Notary System is discriminating women on their fundamental rights to inheritance.¹³

On March 11th, a case related to public property usurpers in Mitrovica, Gjilan and Skenderaj was sent to the prosecution in Gjilan and Mitrovica.¹⁴

On March 16th, following the public electoral pledge made by the mayor of the municipality of Viti, municipal authorities shut down the casinos Viti.¹⁵

On March 17th, a case on the damages to over 300 pipes destined for the water factory in Shkabaj was sent to the Basic Court of Prishtina.¹⁶

On March 17th, in the municipality of Deçan, the debate revolved around the historical landmark “Verrat e Llukës” an area where blood feuds were reconciled in the past. However, the debate revealed that that the area had turned into the largest waste landfill. After the debate, the mayor and the Minister of Environment signed a Memorandum of Understanding for cleaning and creating green spaces, which is expected to be implemented in the near future.¹⁷

On March 22nd, in the municipality of Kamenica, the mayor had promised that a school would be built in Rogane, which happened after the debate.¹⁸

On March 24th, KALLXO.com reported that the father-in-law of the deputy-mayor and an assembly member won tenders in Skënderaj. Life in Kosovo initiated the debate on a set of pictures published to show that the project was not being carried out as initially planned.

On March 27th, in the municipality of Klina, during a debate municipal officials insisted that the water is potable in Klina. However, research conducted following the debate, and the results published on KALLXO.com, revealed that the water in Klina is 52 per cent contaminated, which poses serious concerns for the quality of life provided for the citizens of the Municipality of Klina, despite the fact that the Mayor of the Municipality stated the opposite.¹⁹

On April 2nd, another promise in the debate in Lipjan was closing a concrete mixer that was located on the property of the municipality. This was shut down by the Inspectorate after the debate in this municipality.²⁰

On April 4th, in the municipality of Gjakova, the grant scheme for small and medium businesses was finally achieved, and a budget of 70 thousand Euros was set aside for this grant. This can be considered as a promise kept as it was made during municipal debates facilitated by Life in Kosovo.²¹

On April 9th, in the municipality of Lipjan, during the “Life in the Municipality” debates, the mayor had promised that he would start rebuilding the “Sami Kelmendi” stadium in spring. However, the previously mentioned did not happen in time, but work started later in spring 2016 after he was interviewed by KALLXO.com.²²

On April 25th, KALLXO.com reported that the Minister of Justice, Hajredin Kuci, awarded Minir Hoti, a judge, with the prize of being “tolerant”. Hoti had indirectly tolerated domestic violence by not punishing the perpetrator in one case.²³

On April 29th, the mayor of Prishtina promised to operationalize the city library, and he has now started moving the books to a new building in Dardania.²⁴

APR

2016

11. <http://kallxo.com/kamioni-me-dokumente-te-pallatit-te-drejtjesise-ndalet-ne-kufi/>

12. <http://kallxo.com/vdekja-e-pazbardhur-e-punetorit-te-ngrohjes/>

13. <http://kallxo.com/dnk/drejtesia-ne-kosove-e-drejte-e-mohuar-e-grave/>

14. <http://kallxo.com/dnk/uzurpatorit-e-paprekshem-2/>

15. <http://kallxo.com/mbyllet-bastoret-ne-viti/>

16. <http://kallxo.com/jnk/afera-e-ujesjellesit/>

17. <http://kallxo.com/verrat-e-llukes-nga-deponi-e-berilokut-ne-kompleks-historik/>

18. <http://kallxo.com/shkolla-pa-emer-e-financuar-nga-ja/>

19. <http://kallxo.com/milionat-nuk-i-japin-fund-dilemes-per-ujin-ne-klina/>

20. <http://kallxo.com/pritet-demolimi-betonieres-ne-toke-te-komunes/>

21. <http://kallxo.com/kusari-lila-harrojini-korporatat/>

22. <http://kallxo.com/lipjani-nis-ndertimin-e-stadiumit-te-premtuar/>

23. <http://kallxo.com/ministri-dekoroi-gjyqtarin-tolerues/>

24. <https://kk.rks-gov.net/prishtina/News/Njoftim-----Hivzi-Sylejmani-aspx>

MAY 2016

On May 1st, a case related to suspicions of abuse from the Municipality of Gjilan was given to a prosecutor from the serious crimes department for further investigation.²⁵ BIRN research revealed that the Municipality paved private roads with asphalt by using public money, and it was found that there were other problems with properties.

On May 6th, an indictment was raised against prosecutor Bajram Hamitaga after BIRN's reporting on bribery in a case he was trying.²⁶

On May 9th, BIRN reported that in the Municipality of Mitrovica, there were shortcomings marring tendering procedures. The Mayor of this Municipality has often received remarks from the Regulatory Commission of Public Procurement and later, this case was sent to the Basic Prosecution in Mitrovica.²⁷

On May 18th, BIRN reported that the Mayor of Prishtina fulfilled a promise he made during the "Life in the Municipality" debate. He had promised to improve public transport, and an agreement between the Municipality and the Ministry of Finance was signed for 51 new buses.²⁸ There was therefore an agreement signed for the loan to purchase the buses.

On May 19th, in the Municipality of Prishtina, the Mayor promised that he would open new kindergartens in every area of the city. After being mentioned on the debate, it served as a reminder for the implementation of promises, and as a result, a new kindergarten in the Arberia neighborhood was opened.²⁹ Apart from that, on the same day, a new kindergarten in Kodra e Trimave started construction.³⁰

On May 23rd, in the Municipality of Obiliq, the project for a pavement and public lighting started after the debate.³¹

On May 27th, BIRN marked a promise kept by the Municipality of Vushtrri, which was for the water factory to start working. The promise was made by the Mayor for the three past mandates during the municipal debates.³² BIRN had constantly received reports from the citizens of the Municipality of Vushtrri for their problems regarding the quality of water.

On June 4th, a citizen reported to KALLXO.com that the Matura test was leaked on social networks.³³

On June 7th, BIRN reported that a professor in the Faculty of Medicine had put a different date for his birthday in his CV, making himself a year younger. After BIRN reported it, the CV was fixed.³⁴ As such, this seemed to give the professor an extra year at work, since he in fact was about to retire.

On June 22nd, two people were convicted by the Basic Court in Prishtina for joining the terrorist organization "Harausham", which at the time did not exist. After BIRN investigated this and revealed this fact, the Court of Appeals returned the case for retrial because of lack of evidence.³⁵

JUL 2016

On July 20th, BIRN and Internews Kosova sued the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council for denying access to public documents. The council had denied our journalists access to files of disciplinary actions taken against prosecutors. We believed that the citizens deserved to know which prosecutors had disciplinary actions taken against them. The Basic and Appeal courts have both decided in favor of BIRN and I/Ks.³⁶

On August 10th, BIRN revealed the reasons behind the shortcomings marring a tendering procedure in the Ministry of Economic Development, which led to the withdrawal of the World Bank to finance a given project. As such, the case was sent to the Basic Prosecution in Prishtina for review.³⁷

On August 30th, a case related to document forgery was sent to the Basic Prosecution in Prishtina.³⁸ After BIRN reported that the documents were plagiarized, the case was sent to the rector of the University of Tirana.

On August 30th, an indictment was raised for Lutfi Haziri, the Mayor of Gjilan, after an investigation by BIRN revealed that he abused his power and duty to favor a businessman.³⁹

JUN 2016

AUG 2016

25. <http://kallxo.com/komuna-e-gjilanit-asfalt-on-rugje-private-para-publike/>

26. <http://kallxo.com/dnk/pazaret-ne-prokurori/>

27. <http://kallxo.com/bahitiri-inauguron-punimet-pa-u-mbylle-tenderi/>

28. <http://kallxo.com/pas-debatit-pajtim-per-kredine-e-autobuseve/>

29. <http://kallxo.com/lagjia-arberia-behet-cerdhe/>

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31. <https://kk.rks-gov.net/obiliq/NeE5/Kryetari-Gashi-inspekton-projektin-kapital-te-komu.aspx>

32. <http://kallxo.com/vushtrria-behet-fabrike-te-ujit/>

33. <http://kallxo.com/testi-matures-del-online/>

34. <http://kallxo.com/permiresohet-gabimi-ne-cv-qe-e-bente-profesorin-te-ri/>

35. <http://kallxo.com/gjnk/shkeljet-e-shumta-ligjore-kthejne-harausham-ne-rigjykim-2/>

36. <http://birn.eu.com/en/news-and-events/birn-wins-legal-battle-against-kosovo-prosecutorial-council>

37. <http://kallxo.com/gjnk/tenderi-keq-largon-banken-boterore-dhe-demton-buxhetin/>

38. <http://kallxo.com/gjnk/dyshime-te-reja-per-falsifikim-dokumentesh-ne-avancimet-e/>

39. <http://kallxo.com/lutfi-%E2%80%8B88Haziri-flet-per-aktakuzen/>

SEP
2016

On September 26th, an investigation by Justice in Kosovo into a prosecutor who had asked for favors from a suspect was broadcast. an indictment was raised for the prosecutor. Bajram Hamitaga, prosecutor in Prizren, is charged with misconduct in official duty or authority.⁴⁰

On October 3rd, Justice in Kosovo reported that over eight thousand people have been sentenced to jail for misdemeanors, despite the fact that the law does not foresee it and that it is against the constitution. The following Monday, three days after the broadcast, the Appeal Court canceled all prison sentences for misdemeanors that have been imposed and are waiting to be executed.⁴¹

On October 16th, KALLXO.com reported that the Director of Education at Dragash Municipality, Hajri Ramadani, is keeping his position even though a decision of the court prohibits him keeping the office. On October 27th, KALLXO.com reported that the Dragash Mayor, Salim Jenuzi, dismissed Ramadani from his duties.

On October 28th, an investigative report depicting a prosecutor dining with the accused parties was sent to the Basic Prosecution in Prishtina.⁴² Prosecutor Visar Musa resigned because he dined with the suspect.⁴³ Another resignation was done by the prosecutor Bajram Hamitaga due to his admitting that he had accepted bribes in a case he was handling.⁴⁴

OCT
2016

NOV
2016

KALLXO.com reported on November 5th about several villas built in the National Park in Bjeshket e Kabashit, where the state had publicly pledged to protect the mountains. The government and the Ministry of Environment and Spatial Planning made calls for protecting National Parks and other mountains, and they had not honored the promise to protect the area. After KALLXO.com reported about it, the case was filed as a criminal complaint to the police.⁴⁵

On December 1st, after tax abuse reports reached KALLXO.com, and following a several-month-long investigation on an organized tax evasion scheme in the KTA, BIRN broadcast three episodes looking at organized tax theft at KTA. Murat Mehmeti, a whistleblower from KTA, told Life in Kosovo about shell companies involved in this scandal, which issued fake bills to more than 200 companies with the purpose of evading taxes, causing multi-million euro damages to the Kosovo budget. After Mehmeti started questioning the problems at the KTA, people in managing positions were transferring him from one position to the other so that he would not make those scandals public. This televised program split into three episodes has influenced the State Prosecution, the Special Prosecution, the Tax Administration and the Ministry of Finances to have a meeting to discuss the steps forward, but so far no concrete measures have been taken. Mehmeti garnered support mainly from the international community, such as ambassadors, EULEX, and also from the Kosovo civil society. He was awarded with the "Civic Bravery" award by Levizja FOL, because he had the bravery to come out and speak publicly about the scandal he had witnessed.⁴⁶

On December 12th, KALLXO.com reported that patients at the Kosovo University Clinics Centre (QKUK) are lacking medicines that cannot be found on the regular market.⁴⁷

On December 13th, a disciplinary case against police officers in Suhareke for fighting in the police station was sent to the Disciplinary Commission of the Kosovo Police, after BIRN found out that there have been verbal fights between the police officers.⁴⁸

DEC
2016

40. <http://kallxo.com/konfirmohet-aktakuza-ndaj-prokurorit-te-kositeses-dhe-cadres/>

41. <http://kallxo.com/apeli-anulon-qindra-vendime-burg-per-kundervajtjet/>

42. <http://kallxo.com/prokurori-premtion-terheqjen-pas-drekes-se-gabuar/>

43. <http://kallxo.com/ep-doreheqje-prokurori-qe-drekoi-te-akuzuarin/>

44. <http://kallxo.com/prokurori-hamitaga-shoferin-nuk-e-dergova-une/>

45. <http://kallxo.com/ndertime-pa-leje-ne-parkun-nacional/>

46. <http://kallxo.com/jnk/vjedhja-e-organizuar-tatimore-3/>

47. <http://kallxo.com/mungesa-e-faktorit-viii-rrezikon-pacientet-hemofiline/>

48. <http://kallxo.com/fjalosen-togeret-e-suharekes/>

Luxury Purchases

This section basically reveals how much money institutions spend on purchasing expensive devices, presents and so on based on several announced tenders.

On December 17th, KALLXO.com wrote about the Water Supply Company from Gjakova named “Radoniqi”, which planned to distribute presents worth between 20 to 100 euros for its employees and to 30 poor families. Earlier this year, KALLXO.com reported that the Ministry of European Integration spent 875 euros on buying umbrellas for special guests. And in March 2016, KALLXO.com also reported about the Kosovo Privatization Agency, which had spent 5,000 euros on the End of the Year Party.⁴⁹

On December 17th, KALLXO.com reported that the Municipality of Mamusha spent 13,500 euros on buying an agrimotor. This vehicle is to be used for assisting in cleaning the roads of this Municipality. This vehicle was to be purchased with some money that a Turkish Municipality named Bolu had donated to Mamusha, but after a few reports submitted to the Review Organ for Procurement, the tender was changed because they were trying to match the tender to a certain company.⁵⁰ The agrimotor was then purchased and cost 13,500 euros despite the fact that the amount according to the contract was 15,000 euros.

On December 14th, KALLXO.com wrote about the amount of money that the Commission for Mines and Minerals has spent on buying iPads for their staff. One iPad, according to the contract, costs 950 euros.⁵¹ KALLXO.com had also earlier reported about other Kosovo institutions that have spent money on purchasing expensive devices.

On December 13th, KALLXO.com published an article revealing that the Municipality of Vushtrri wrapped decorations in flags. The amount of money this Municipality has spent on this tender for decorations of the office on buying pens and national flags is 735 euros.⁵²

On December 3rd, after contacting the information office of the Municipality of Hani i Elezit, KALLXO.com reported that this Municipality has spent 989 euros on purchasing calendars and pens. This purchase was to be done in the beginning of the year, in January, but instead it was delayed until March.⁵³

On November 29th, KALLXO.com reported that the Ministry of Diaspora has spent 1,000 euros on buying flowers for the graves of war martyrs, regardless

of the fact that their graves are in not such a good condition. This amount has traditionally been spent to pay tribute to the martyrs annually or on other ceremonies, though KALLXO.com had several times reported that they are rarely taken care of.⁵⁴

On November 24th, KALLXO.com wrote about an expense caused by the Ministry of Local Government Administration, which was worth an amount of 630 euros. They purchased a smartphone which is to be used by the Deputy Minister of MLGA. This smartphone was purchased according to the procedure of the minimum amount, without announcement for a contract in advance.⁵⁵

On November 23rd, KALLXO.com reported that the Municipality of Klllokot has spent 28,000 euros on buying a luxurious vehicle. This purchase was done by the request of the Mayor, but it is said to be officially used for further trips of other officials around Kosovo.⁵⁶

On November 15th, KALLXO.com reported about the Ministry of European Integration, which has spent an amount of 875 euros on purchasing umbrellas. Based on simple calculations, the price per umbrella is 17.5 euros, as they were designed with the logo of this Ministry and were of high quality. They are to be distributed to high-level visitors, and for other representations.⁵⁷

On November 24th, KALLXO.com reported that the Kosovo Police has been equipped with a luxurious vehicle, a BMW 6. This vehicle had previously been confiscated by the Agency for Sequestered or Confiscated Assets by a decision made by the Court since it was part of a criminal offence. The Ministry of Justice had paid 1000 euros for its repair, and afterwards gave it to the Kosovo Police for usage.⁵⁸

On December 25th, KALLXO.com reported that the Basic Court in Mitrovica has purchased a smartphone costing 995 euros. After contacting them, KALLXO.com wrote that they did not provide information as to who will be using this device.⁵⁹

On March 19th, KALLXO.com wrote about the End of the Year party that the Kosovo Privatization Agency had organized and the money they had allocated for this event. Based on the announcement found

49. <http://kallxo.com/deri-100-euro-pakot-e-dhurave-te-radoniqit/>

50. <http://kallxo.com/mamusha-harxhon-13-mije-e-500-euro-per-traktor/>

51. <http://kallxo.com/komm-blen-ipad-950-eurosh/>

52. <http://kallxo.com/komuna-e-vushtrise-mbeshtjell-dekoratat-flamuj/>

53. <http://kallxo.com/989-euro-per-kalendaret-e-vonuar-te-hanit-te-elezit/>

54. <http://kallxo.com/ministria-blen-1-mije-euro-lule/>

55. <http://kallxo.com/ministria-i-blen-samsung-s6-gjergj-dedajt/>

56. <http://kallxo.com/klllokoti-shpenzon-28-mije-euro-per-veture-luksoze/>

57. <http://kallxo.com/ministria-paguan-17-5-euro-per-nje-cader/>

58. <http://kallxo.com/policia-e-kosoves-behet-me-bmw-x6/>

59. <http://kallxo.com/gjykata-ne-mitrovica-blen-telefon-995-euro/>

at the Regulatory Commission of Public Procurement, this Agency spent more than 5,000 euros on alcoholic drinks for this event.⁶⁰

On November 27th, KALLXO.com reported that the Municipality of Klina allocated 1,000 euros of its budget on hand watches. These watches are to be distributed as presents to the retired workers of this Municipality.⁶¹

On December 17th, KALLXO.com published an article reporting that the Municipality of Mitrovica spent 9,500 euros to purchase iPhones for its staff with public money. Also, some of the state institutions have bought both iPhones and iPads for their staffs, which the KALLXO.com team has continuously reported on.⁶²

Five of the members of the State Agency for Protecting Personal Data's Board, as it was written about on December 19th, will be awarded a watch as a gift, considering their completion of their 5-year mandates. As such, securing such gifts will cost Kosovo 450 euros.⁶³

On December 21st, KALLXO.com reported that the Kosovo Agency for Intelligence allocated an amount of 7,000 EUR for buying gifts for children. The agency has neither mentioned the number of children nor the names of those being awarded a gift, although KALLXO.com has asked for such information. KALLXO.com has published various articles on state institutions using public money to purchase luxurious items.⁶⁴

On December 24th, KALLXO.com posted that the Ombudsperson's Institution has spent over 4,000 euros on purchasing 21 mobile phones for its staff, including an iPhone 6 worth 830 euros. The Institution told KALLXO.com that 20 purchases were made for its managerial, administrative, and legal staff. However, the iPhone 6 was specifically purchased, as KALLXO team reports, for the Ombudsperson's Office.⁶⁵

As KALLXO.com reported on December 26th, 2016, North Mitrovica has spent over 3,000 euros of public money on gifts. The KALLXO.com team requested information but did not receive any from the municipality on the number of gift packages purchased or to whom they were distributed.⁶⁶

As KALLXO.com wrote on December 31st, 2016, Regional Water Mitrovica, similar to the above mentioned agencies, spent over 2,700 euros on New Year's gifts. Based on a few simple calculations, this company has spent 10.98 euros per gift.⁶⁷

On December 22nd, KALLXO.com wrote about the news on a tender, which the Municipality of Malisheva awarded to a company owned by the brother of the Malisheva Deputy Mayor. After contacting the Deputy Mayor, Rexhep Mazreku, he stated that the company is a common ownership, but in the registration document,

it is written that the company belongs to his brother, Refki Mazreku. The amount that this tender is worth is 2,574 euros.⁶⁸

On May 5th, KALLXO.com reported that the Kosovo Assembly has initiated procedures to purchase two scanners. Based on an announcement issued at the Regulatory Commission of Public Procurement, the Kosovo Assembly has foreseen a contract worth 70,000 euros.⁶⁹

On January 7th, KALLXO.com reported that the Kosovo Police did not announce that they would be bringing water cannons to a protest. Two days before the protests are to begin, the Kosovo Police refused to state whether they are properly equipped or prepared for the protest. KALLXO.com asked them if they signed a contract for a tender worth 1,428,960.00, but they responded simply by saying that they are prepared for any situation.⁷⁰

Fact-Checking Activities



In December 2016, KALLXO.com launched the first fact-checking tool to rate the truthfulness of public statements made by high public officials, which goes by the name of 'Krypometër'. Over the past 17 years, there has been no systematic verification of the credibility of statements made by individuals who hold public office. Due to the uncertainty, obscurity and lack of accountability for public statements, KALLXO.com and 'Life in Kosovo' launched this tool. Among 11 'Krypometer' articles published in 2016, highlights were on the promises made, but not held, by the following officials, the President and the Prime Minister on job creation for Kosovo citizens. As such, 'Krypometer' will continue to operate by selecting written and broadcast speeches, news articles, press statements, interviews, campaign brochures, advertisements and Facebook posts. Since KALLXO.com cannot select every assertion, it decided to select issues that are current and important, by also considering the citizens' opinions.⁷¹

60. <http://kallxo.com/akp-raki-me-para-publike-per-vit-te-ri/>

61. <http://kallxo.com/komuna-e-klines-harxhon-1-mije-euro-per-ore-dore/>

62. <http://kallxo.com/mitrovica-e-veriut-shpenzon-9500-euro-per-iphone/>

63. <http://kallxo.com/445-euro-per-ore-dore/>

64. <http://kallxo.com/aki-blen-dhurata-per-femije/>

65. <http://kallxo.com/iphone-830-euro-per-zyren-e-avokatit-te-popullit/>

66. <http://kallxo.com/mitrovica-e-veriut-con-mbi-3-mije-euro-ne-dhurata/>

67. <http://kallxo.com/ujesjellesi-mitrovices-con-2700-euro-ne-dhurata/>

68. <http://kallxo.com/komuna-e-malisheves-jep-tender-kompanise-se-nenkryetarit/>

69. <http://kallxo.com/dy-skanere-per-kuvendin/>

70. <http://kallxo.com/policia-mban-sekret-topat-e-ujit/>

71. <http://birm.eu.com/en/news-and-events/krypometer-kosovo-s-first-fact-checker>

Media Production: investigative reporting, analysis and debate



TV: Jeta në Kosovë / Life in Kosovo and Drejtësia në Kosovë / Justice in Kosovo



Following the reports on floods around Kosovo, the Life in Kosovo programme commenced 2016 with discussions on *force majeure*, and the level of preparedness to deal with such threats at the state level. It further touched on economic issues such as the value of domestic products, the demand for them and their potential for international export. Life in Kosovo also investigated the issues of rule of law and justice, such as holding officials who misuse their duties accountable in cooperation with the Special Prosecution. The debates also focused on the rise of religious extremism in Kosovo in the aftermath of reporting from international media on the alleged Saudi influence on drawing people to wars in Syria and Iraq. Two issues were articulated as the main reasons why Kosovo was not moving forward in the visa liberalization process with the EU: the border demarcation with Montenegro and evidence of progress in the fight against corruption. Undoubtedly, political crises were the focus of 2016, as the opposition parties were boycotting the sessions of the Kosovo Assembly. The one territorial issue that has been practically the ground reason for the political riot in the country, the border demarcation with Montenegro, was thoroughly

discussed with experts, MPs and the Prime Minister of Montenegro himself. Along with the fight against corruption, opinions of the EU ambassadors on their experience during their mandates in Kosovo were also sought. Culture and sports were also given attention by discussing the support provided to the Kosovo Olympic Committee by the state. Interviews with regional Prime Ministers were conducted, followed up by investigations on natural resources such as coal and the intentions for them to be exploited. The quality of health and education services were not left out of the topics either, nor were the Kosovo Correction Services. Marching against corruption, hard-hitting investigations revealed tax evasion scandals involving the management of the Tax Administration of Kosovo.

The Justice in Kosovo shows started the year focusing on the weak coordination among the court system in Kosovo. Examples included sentencing people to 30 years in prison, their immediate release within 24 hours, followed by additional warrants issued for the same person as an evidence of lack of horizontal and vertical coordination between levels of the rule of law institutions. Further, we touched on the issue of denied rights of property inheritance by showcasing the sensitive case of Shyhrete Berisha from the municipality of Suhareka, who lost her family in 1999, and is now being denied access to the house in which she lived with her family until 1999. Attention was also focused on the non-implementation of agreements for the operationalization of the judicial offices in the north of the country, first initiated by the former PM of Kosovo Hashim Thaci, completed by the current PM Mustafa, but not yet implemented in practice. Another top investigation revealed the level of confidentiality of the prosecuting authorities in preserving secret files, and also in preserving evidence of war crimes. The investigation of the scandal, which was kept hidden by police, includes details about how the interception files ended up with the vendors who sell seeds at Mother Teresa square in Prishtina. The issue of usurped properties was broadcast in two separate episodes, as it revealed the names of people who own illegal properties, and the reasons why it took 14 years for the Privatization Agency of Kosovo to publicly disclose such information involving top political figures. Following this, through a special agreement with EULEX, we broadcast exclusive footage of the raids conducted against criminal histories of local Kosovo MPs such as Azem Syla. Further, investigations also showed that there about were eight thousand people who had been wrongly sentenced to jail, and other investigations revealed corruption in the judiciary, with one prosecutor dining with the defendant. The Justice in Kosovo show won the award of "The Best Television Story on Transparency and Anti-Corruption", a story composed by journalist Naim Krasniqi named "The Wrong Lunch" related to wrongdoings by prosecutors from Kosovo Prosecutorial Council.

WEB: KALLXO.com, Gazeta JnK, Prishtina Insight, Kosovo contribution to Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice



KALLXO.com is BIRN Kosovo and Internews Kosovo's fastest-growing product. It is a platform for reporting corruption, shortcomings in public services, fraud and issues of transparency and accountability. Initially, KALLXO.com received and researched information from citizens' reports, and soon it turned into a bona fide source of information as a comprehensive news portal. It offers objective, unbiased and justified information.

Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë (Life in Kosovo Online Newsmagazine) is BIRN Kosovo's outlet for feature stories and in-depth investigations. In 2016, Florina Ujupi won the second place prize for reporting on the job market and employment in Kosovo. The award was given by the Kosovo Journalists Association and the Enhancing Youth Employment project. Kreshnik Gashi, Ivan Angelovski, Petrit Çollaku and Jelena Cosic won third place in EU Journalism in Serbia for a story revealing how a multi-million-dollar road construction contract was quietly handed to a consortium with little highway-building experience and linked to controversial Serbian businessman Zvonko Veselinovic.

Prishtina Insight



After seven years in print, Prishtina Insight went online in February 2016 so that PI's readers can have access to the best journalism from Kosovo in English wherever they are.

One top story covered by Prishtina Insight this year was on a series of controversial Facebook updates posted by Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, which offended women and civil society activists regarding his reactions to events that unfolded in the Kosovo Parliament during the beginning of the year.⁷² Another top story that caught attention during 2016 was the terror attack that happened in Munich, Germany, in which three Kosovo citizens were among the nine casualties.⁷³ Prishtina Insight also covered innovation in the technology sector by writing about Gjirafa, an online search engine catering to Albanian speakers, which launched the first technology online shop in Kosovo with door-to-door delivery.⁷⁴

Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice

BIRN Kosovo is part of the regional team that produces Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice, the leading regional online source of news and in-depth analysis, with the latter having a particular focus on war crime trials. In 2016, Balkan Insight published an investigation that revealed that Balkan countries have been selling arms to Saudi Arabia and other countries, and the same arms are ending up in the conflict in Syria, into the hands of the rebels and ISIS. The investigation was also published on The Guardian.

BIG DEAL: Monitoring the implementation of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreements



Since 2011, Kosovo and Serbia have held negotiations on freedom of movement, mutual recognition of university diplomas, telecommunications, energy, and more. A high-level agreement between the two prime ministers, signed in April 2013, provides for the effective integration of the Serb-majority northern municipalities. BIRN Kosovo partnered with the Belgrade-based Center

72. <http://prishtinainsight.com/pm-worried-about-women-who-graze-western-funds-leave-husbands-to-go-to-north-korea/>

73. <http://prishtinainsight.com/three-kosovo-citizens-dead-munich-attack/>

74. <http://prishtinainsight.com/kosovos-google-launches-first-online-tech-shop-in-the-country-mag/> 75. <http://kallxo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/E-Drejta-e-Grave-p%C3%ABr-Trash%C3%ABgim-n%C3%AB-76.Pron%C3%AB.pdf>

for Research, Transparency and Accountability to monitor the level of implementation of each of the agreements to see how their implementation or lack of coordination affects ordinary citizens. On April 19, three years after the first agreements were signed, BIRN Kosovo published a BIG DEAL report. This report focused on the constitutional court decision on the establishment of the Association of Serbian majority municipalities. More than 120 people participated in the roundtable discussion of the report's findings. In addition, two roundtables were held in North Mitrovica for the BIG DEAL report held on March 17th and March 23rd. During the second roundtable, panellists included mayors of the northern municipalities, assembly members, municipal directors, local CSOs and media.

Monitoring & Advocacy

In order to reflect on the work that has been done as part of monitoring and advocacy, BIRN organized a few roundtable discussions, conferences and report publishing events. In the following, we will list a number of activities which supported the publishing of several reports. BIRN published a report on Women's Property Rights on July 28th during a roundtable discussion.⁷⁵ Through this report, BIRN's aim was to present a picture of the major problems around a woman's right to inherit property. Moreover, BIRN, along with Internews Kosova, published their second annual report on Public Procurement on June 29th, 2016.⁷⁶ The report, titled "Tenders of Endearment," includes many important elements related to public expenditures by local and central institutions during 2015. The report was launched through a roundtable discussion on the same day. On May 2016, during a roundtable discussion, BIRN published its Court Monitoring report, in which particular attention was paid to trials related to corruption, but it also addressed other problems observed during fieldwork.⁷⁷ Furthermore, BIRN also launched its fourth Big Deal report named "Awkward Juggling" on the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, in collaboration with Internews Kosova, Democratization Policy Council, BIRN Serbia, the Centre for Euro-Atlantic Studies and Advocacy Centre for Democratic Culture.⁷⁸ It was presented through a discussion held in Prishtina on April 19th, 2016.

BIRN Kosovo has monitored 689 court hearings across Kosovo courts of various levels in 2016. BIRN monitors have monitored corruption and pre-detention cases such as organized crime, aggravated murder and unauthorized possession of narcotics, threats and use of weapons, as well as property damage. All monitored cases were civil or criminal. In addition, BIRN has monitored 169 contracting authorities for public procurement monitoring, including those at the national and local levels. During this reporting period, BIRN sent 232 complaints to relevant institutions as follow up of our investigations

and reporting. It has further continued to monitor public procurement and report about issues marring tendering processes at the local and central level.

Moreover, BIRN has continuously sent to public institutions requests for access to public documents, which has contributed to the overall transparency of institutions. During the State Matura exam (four exams in total) held during June and August 2016, BIRN, in partnership with Internews Kosova, monitored the process of examination across 40 testing centres in Kosovo. By monitoring the work of public institutions and pushing for transparency and better quality in service delivery, BIRN Kosovo directly contributed to achieving this objective.

Training and media development



BIRN and its partners Internews Kosova and BIRN HUB have trained more than 1,000 journalists, court monitors, technical staff and researchers coming from different backgrounds living in Kosovo. This hands-on training builds capacities to deliver professional journalism for print/TV/radio and online media. The trainings covered the following modules: rights and responsibilities of journalists, protection of sources, and use of social media, compiling public information requests, monitoring public procurement and understanding public contracts, alongside an active mentorship program for the newly hired staff.

⁷⁵ http://kallxo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/07/E-Drejte-e-Grave-p%C3%ABr-Trash%C3%ABgim-n%C3%AB-76_Pron%C3%AB.pdf

⁷⁶ http://kallxo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/BIRN-RAPORT_NDER-ME-TENDER_alb.pdf

⁷⁷ <http://kallxo.com/live-raporti-monitorimit-te-gjykatave-2015/>

⁷⁸ <http://prishtinainsight.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/BIRN-Report-2016-ENG.pdf>



MEDIA PRODUCTION

TV Production

“Life in Kosovo”/ “Jeta në Kosovë(JnK)”
Current Affairs Programme

(2005 to present)

BIRN Kosovo’s flagship television programme, *Life in Kosovo*, focuses on current affairs in Kosovo’s economic, education, social and political realms.

JANUARY

2016

- Life in Kosovo on flooding and annual summary: On January 7, Life in Kosovo broadcast a summary of reports and interviews with citizens about the flooding in various municipalities in Kosovo. It also broadcast a summary of the main events in 2015.
- Life in Kosovo on Domestic Products: On January 14, Life in Kosovo held a debate with local producers about the support of the state and citizens for local producers, and the quality of their products.
- Life in Kosovo about the Indictment against Enver Hasani: On January 21, Life in Kosovo broadcast interviews and a debate about the indictment raised by the Special Prosecution against the former head of Constitutional Court, Enver Hasani. The indictment accuses Hasani of falsifying an official document and abusing his position and/or official authority when he allegedly signed a document which granted international judges of the Constitutional Court another mandate without consulting the President, who decrees the judges.

Life in Kosovo: Parties in boards: On January 28, Life in Kosovo debated about political interference in the boards of public enterprises and independent agencies.

FEBRUARY

2016

- Life in Kosovo: Fight for water: On February 11, Life in Kosovo broadcast a programme focused on the Prishtina Water Company and the problems it has encountered with the head and its members of the board.
- Life in Kosovo – 8th Anniversary of Independence: On February 18, Life in Kosovo broadcast a programme with compilations of the Life in Kosovo programmes during the anniversaries of the Independence Day comparing and contrasting progress and events that marked each year.
- Life in Kosovo – For the president, with the former presidents: On February 25, Life in Kosovo broadcast interviews with former presidents of Kosovo, Behgjet Pacolli and Fatmir Sejdiu, about the political situation in the country, resolving the crisis and electing the new President.

MARCH

2016

- Life in Kosovo – Municipalities in court: On March 4, Life in Kosovo debated about mayors, former mayors and municipal officials in Kosovo who during the years had been subject of judiciary processes.
- Life in Kosovo – Assembly without opposition: On March 11, Life in Kosovo debated with MPs on the current political situation in Kosovo, and the potential way out of the political stalemate.
- Life in Kosovo – The water company affair: On March 18, Life in Kosovo debated about the damages to 300 pipes destined for the new water factory in Shkabaj.
- Life in Kosovo – Islam in Kosovo: On March 24, Life in Kosovo debated about the terrorist attacks in Brussels, Ankara, Istanbul and Paris and about the rise of extremism and the impact of such events in Kosovo.

APRIL

2016

- Life in Kosovo – Demarcation, Politics and UP: On April 1, Life in Kosovo debated about the border demarcation with Montenegro, for the inauguration of President Hashim Thaci, and broadcast an interview with the new rector of University of Prishtina Marjan Dema on his plans to improve the quality at the University of Prishtina.
- Life in Kosovo – Municipalities for the President: On April 7, Life in Kosovo debated with mayors of some municipalities about the election of the new president and their expectations for the presidential upcoming mandate.
- Life in Kosovo – Serbian elections in Kosovo: On April 14, Life in Kosovo debated about the campaign and the statements of Serbian leaders in the Kosovo territory. During the campaign for parliamentary elections in Serbia, some Serbian leaders decided to campaign in Kosovo territories as well.
- Life in Kosovo – Local Elections: Presheva: On April 22, Life in Kosovo debated with Albanian mayor candidates for Presheva.
- Life in Kosovo – Fight against corruption: On April 28, Life in Kosovo debated about the biggest action of EULEX on anti-corruption efforts, where 350 Kosovo Police and EULEX officers raided 42 locations related to 40 suspects, including the now former PDK MP, Azem Sylja, suspected of leading an organized crime group related to land ownerships.

MAY

2016

- Life in Kosovo – BIG DEAL 4: On May 5, Life in Kosovo discussed the latest BIG DEAL report, published by BIRN, which monitors the level of implementation of the Serbia-Kosovo agreements. This report was published three years after the first agreement was signed.
- Life in Kosovo – where is the border?: On May 12, Life in Kosovo discussed the border demarcation with Montenegro.
- Life in Kosovo – soft justice: On May 19, Life in Kosovo broadcast the conference of the annual court monitoring report, where top stakeholders of the justice sector in Kosovo discussed the large number of cases reaching statute of limitations without ever being prosecuted, and the delays in raising indictments.
- Life in Kosovo – Macedonia crisis: On May 26, Life in Kosovo broadcast an interview with Ali Ahmeti, head of Democratic Union for Integration, and broadcast a debate about the situation in Macedonia a year after the Kumanova unrest.

JUNE

2016

- Life in Kosovo: Investments in Justice and Sports: On June 2, Life in Kosovo broadcast a tour of the Palace of Justice, where we interviewed several maintenance workers, engineers and officials working in this Palace about the problems with heating, cooling, ventilation and elevators that have been encountered. The Palace of Justice is a building sponsored by the EU, which houses the prosecution and the courts of Prishtina, the Appeal Court, the Supreme Court, et cetera. Also, a sports report was broadcast, showcasing the state of local stadiums following Kosovo's accession to the International Football Federation.
- Life in Kosovo: A cold donation in Gjakova: On June 9, Life in Kosovo broadcast a report on the problems that the Gjakova municipality has encountered in using a donation for building a heating plant in Gjakova.
- Life in Kosovo: Kosovo in World Cup: On June 23, Life in Kosovo debated about Kosovo being accepted in FIFA and UEFA, and the qualifications of the World Cup, in which Kosovo will participate.

SEPTEMBER

2016

- Life in Kosovo – 4 years in Kosovo – On September 1, Life in Kosovo broadcast an interview with Samuel Zbogar, now former EU ambassador to Kosovo. During the interview, Zbogar focused on corruption in politics, calling for a change in the political class and on the visa liberalization issue.
- Life in Kosovo – interviews with Milo Djukanovic and Haki Abazi – on September 8, Life in Kosovo broadcast two interviews with Montenegrin Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic and Haki Abazi, regional director of Rockefeller Brothers Foundation, where the issue of border demarcation between the two countries and Kosovo-Montenegro relations were broken down.
- Life in Kosovo – Tenders of Endearment – On September 15, Life in Kosovo broadcast the debate that occurred when the Annual Procurement Monitoring report was published. The discussion focused on the findings of the report, which included the fact that the Anti-corruption Agency's opinions are not taken into consideration when tenders are published, and the lack of transparency in capital projects.
- Life in Kosovo: Coal – rip offs or gains? – On September 22, Life in Kosovo discussed Gazeta Jeta ne Kosove's investigation about the application of General Wesley Clark's company to exploit coal in Kosovo. Coal experts, representatives of the government and the independent commission for mines and minerals discuss the legality of the application of this company to research and exploit coal mines.
- Life in Kosovo: Serbia's debt towards Kosovar pensioners – On September 29, Life in Kosovo broadcast an investigation into the money owed by the state of Serbia to Kosovar pensioners that worked and paid contributions during the '90s. The contributions have not reached Kosovars in the form of pensions, because the pension's fund is in Serbia, which refuses to transfer them to Kosovo.

OCTOBER

2016

- Life in Kosovo: Land on coal – On October 13, Life in Kosovo broadcast an investigation on the displacement of residents of Hade in Obiliq to make room for KEK's mining operations.
- Life in Kosovo: Interview Hashim Thaci and Edi Rama – On October 20, Life in Kosovo interviewed President of Kosovo Hashim Thaci about the relations between Kosovo and Albania, the fight against corruption, and the Kosovo mayors from the party he formally chaired who have been indicted and sentenced. In addition, Life in Kosovo also featured an interview with Prime Minister of Albania Edi Rama about his visit to Belgrade, relations between Kosovo and Albania, and relations between Serbia and Albania.
- Life in Kosovo: Kosovo Olympic Committee – on October 27, Life in Kosovo debated on the kind of support that Kosovo sportsmen and women receive from the Ministry of Sports, federations and the Kosovo Olympic Committee, and the Rio Olympics.

NOVEMBER

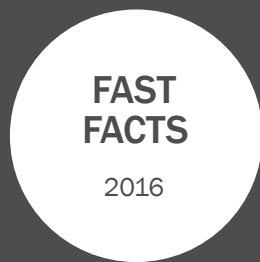
2016

- Life in Kosovo – health sabotages: on November 3, Life in Kosovo broadcast an investigation on Kosovar doctors who despite their desire to come back from other countries to work in health institutions in Kosovo, say that they are encountering difficulties and are being sabotaged.
- Life in Kosovo – Kosovo correction services: on November 10, Life in Kosovo debated about the tragic death of Astrit Dehari, a Vetevendosje activist who was found dead in his cell in the detainment center in Prizren. Life in Kosovo also debated the safety of correction facilities in general.
- Life in Kosovo – Organized theft in Kosovo Tax Administration: On November 17, Life in Kosovo broadcast the several-month-long investigation about a multi-million euro scandal in the Kosovo Tax Administration. A whistleblower from KTA, Murat Mehmeti, told Life in Kosovo about shell companies involved in this scandal who issued fake bills to more than 200 companies, with the purpose of evading taxes, causing multi-million euro damages to the Kosovo budget.
- Life in Kosovo – Organized theft in KTA pt. 2: On November 24, Life in Kosovo broadcast part two of the investigation, interviewing the accountant involved in this scandal, the companies who received the fake bills, and the Special Prosecutor that had dealt with the case. In addition, more details on how the network operated were revealed by the whistleblower.

DECEMBER

2016

- Life in Kosovo – Organized theft in KTA pt 3: On December 1, Life in Kosovo broadcast the final episode of the investigation into the tax evasion scandal in the KTA, showcasing interviews with the director of the KTA and other stakeholders involved in the process.
- Life in Kosovo – Week against corruption: On December 8, Life in Kosovo debated on the effect of the whistleblower, Murat Mehmeti, in the KTA case, the treatment of whistleblowers with the existing legislation and measures taken to rectify problems caused by the tax evasion scheme that was revealed.
- Life in Kosovo – Local elections - Drenas: On December 15, Life in Kosovo debated with the two run-off candidates for mayor in Drenas about their platforms for the citizens of this municipality.
- Life in Kosovo – Macedonia Albanians' calculations: on December 29, Life in Kosovo interviewed Albanian leaders in Macedonia about forming a governing coalition after the elections.



Frequency:
Weekly –Thursdays 8p.m

Current Affairs Debates: **39**
Interviews: **9**

Views on Youtube:
1,208,244

Minutes watched:
12,523,194

Facebook page:
44,123 fans

BIRN is the only media outlet in Kosovo that does municipal and electoral debates systematically by leaving Prishtina and reporting from 35 Kosovo towns, offering the public the opportunity to pose questions to their leaders. As such, BIRN produced and broadcast 32 Life in the Municipality debates, which are listed in the following order:



Jeta ne Komune / Life in the Municipality

Life in Mitrovica
Life in Vushtrri
Life in Lipjan
Life in Fushë Kosovë
Life in Obiliq
Life in Han i Elezit
Life in Ferizaj
Life in Drenas
Life in Malisheva
Life in Prishtina
Life in Gjakova
Life in Junik
Life in Decan
Life in Peja
Life in Klina
Life in Istog

Life in Rahovec
Life in Kacanik
Life in Viti
Life in Gjilan
Life in Suhareka
Life in Kamenica
Life in Skenderaj
Life in Podujeva
Life in Shtime
Life in Dragash
Life in Ranillug
Life in Novoberda
Life in Gracanica
Life in Leposavic
Life in Mamusha
Life in Klllokot

Halfway through their mandate, we have returned to these municipalities in post-election debates all over Kosovo where we broadcast each promise the mayor made two years ago and check if they kept true to their promises.

Differently from previous debates in which the audience addressed questions to the mayors, this time we decided to host our debates in the format of a Municipal Assembly session in order to involve not just the mayor, but the members of the local assembly.

Debates took place in their normal municipal halls. Moderator Jeta Xharra took the role of the Assembly chairperson and then the Assembly members sat in their seats.

These debates are the only debates in the region which systematically visit each municipality since 2007 to hold local leaders accountable.

The series of debates, named Life in the Municipality, were transmitted every Sunday at 11:00 am on the Kosovo public broadcaster, RTK.

It has been two years since the Mayors of Kosovo municipalities have taken office in accordance with their mandates. During the local elections, BIRN Kosovo and Internews Kosova held debates with the candidates for mayoral seats, where they presented their platforms and unveiled respective plans and promises.



TV PRODUCTION

Justice in Kosovo / Drejtësia në Kosovë (DnK)

BIRN started doing current affairs programming in 2005 through *Life in Kosovo* and after five years, there was a need to follow issues related to rule of law more closely rather than chase the latest news and current affairs topic. Thus, *Drejtësia në Kosovë*, DnK, or *Justice in Kosovo*, was created to produce in-depth investigations on cases of injustice with an aim to press relevant institutions to take measures to fix the problems.

Justice in Kosovo takes the information from court monitors who cover 27 municipalities in Kosovo and benefits from an agreement with the Kosovo Police, which allows the DnK teams to film the police in action.



Nehat IDRIZI

Head of Kosovo Judicial Council

“BIRN reports have had an impact on increasing the quality of the judicial system. Court monitoring and exposure of problems that need improvement has an impact on future work so that an independent judicial system can exist for us, and to eliminate the phenomena such as corruption by continuously respecting fundamental rights and freedoms, which are guaranteed by the International Convention and are also supported under the Kosovo Constitution.”

JANUARY

2016

- Record discharge from prison – On January 15th, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an investigation about Fisnik Lajqi, who was sentenced to 30 months in jail but was let go an hour after with the decision of the Peja court. On the same day, this court issued a warrant for Lajqi for another case. Also on the same day, Lajqi was arrested twice—once to be sent to the prison and once to the court. His case shows a serious lack of coordination between the authorities to manage court orders.
- War for volcanic stone – On January 22nd, Justice in Kosovo published an investigation about volcanic stone in the north of Kosovo. Naser Lahu, an investor from Germany, together with a few German experts, found hidden reservoirs of volcanic stone in the north of the country. Volcanic stone is an expensive material which is used to pave the last layer of asphalt. Lahu told Justice in Kosovo about the traps, blackmail and threats he has received to make him give up in the investment and license to exploit the volcanic stone.

- The denied right of women – On January 29th, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an investigation on the difficulties women face to inherit fortune as well as problems with domestic violence. Justice in Kosovo showed the problems that Kosovar women encounter to get their property rights. Justice in Kosovo also interviewed women who were victims of domestic violence, and who have been waiting for years now in courts to earn their right to inherit and share the fortune gained during their years of marriage. Victims of domestic violence are forced to leave their homes and seek help from the Centre for Shelter, which is legally bound not to offer them shelter for a longer period of time. Thus, they are left in the streets. During this programme, Justice in Kosovo also showed the court process of Shyhrete Berisha from Suhareka, who lost her family in 1999 and is now being denied access to the house where she lived with her family until 1999.

FEBRUARY

2016

- Justice in the North - On February 5, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast investigations about the yearlong stagnation of the Kosovo-Serbia agreement for the functionalization of procurement and judicial offices in the north of the country. The agreement that was initiated from the former Prime Minister of Kosovo Hashim Thaqi, and that was concluded by the current Prime Minister Isa Mustafa, has not been implemented in practice yet. New judges and prosecutors are still not decreed, and until this day, the buildings where the justice institutions are going to be placed have not been determined yet.
- Promises for Justice - On February 12, 2016, in an exclusive interview for Justice in Kosovo, the new Chairmen of both the Judicial Council and the Prosecution Council disclosed their reform programs and promises for justice. In two separate electoral processes on February 2016, Nehat Idrizi was elected Chairman of the Judicial Council of Kosovo, while Blerim Isufaj was selected Chairman of the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council.
- Secret Files End Up as Seed Holders - 19 February 2016 – This edition of Justice in Kosovo investigated the level of seriousness of the prosecuting authorities in preserving secret files, and also in preserving evidence of war crimes. The investigation of the scandal, which was kept hidden by police, includes details about how the interception files ended up with the vendors who sell seeds at “Mother Teresa” square in Prishtina. The interviewed vendors told Justice in Kosovo that they obtained those papers from Roma kids, who found them in dumpsters. This edition of Justice in Kosovo also showed the concerns of the inhabitants of Krusha e Madhe for failure to investigate war crimes. The report brings stories of people and their concerns about the fact that no one from the prosecution office ever visited them until now. Residents speak about the risk that the remaining evidence of massacres of Krusha e Madhe will disappear, while the state prosecution did not give clear answers about their failure to act.
- Interview: Hamdi Ibrahim - On 26 February 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an exclusive interview with the director of the Prishtina Basic Court, Hamdi Ibrahim, about the challenges and problems in the judiciary, mainly about the large number of cases, the recent arrest of the deputies, allegations of political influence in courts, as well as low sentences for corruption cases.

MARCH

2016

- **Untouchable Usurpers** - On 04 March 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the investigations on the list of usurpers published from the Privatization Agency of Kosovo. It took almost 14 years for AKP to publish a list with names of the usurpers. On February 15, after promises made by the head of Kosovo Assembly Kadri Veseli and the president of AKP Petrit Gashi, a list with 170 names was published. The investigations of Justice in Kosovo show that on the list of usurpers published from the Privatization Agency of Kosovo, the names of the persons and businesses that are affiliated with politics are excluded. Also, this edition brings out facts about political parties that have offices on a usurped property. In addition, Justice in Kosovo investigation showed that two officials of PDK, one in Gjakova and the other on Deçan, are on public properties. Justice in Kosovo contacted several names that are on the list of usurpers, such as Shpresa Malazogut, Adem Çitaku, Hashim Deshishku, Jakup Siqani, and Bedri Selmani, who claim that these accusations are biased and ungrounded. Because of the large number of persons included on the AKP lists, Justice in Kosovo decided to air a second part of the usurped properties and the negligence of the state prosecution to investigate them.
- **Untouchable Usurpers Part 2 – March 11, 2016** – This edition of Justice in Kosovo continued to investigate the names on the usurpers list of AKP and bring forth other details about powerful usurpers, who since after the war have occupied social property. The investigation has brought new facts about how the Kosovo municipalities have alienated social properties with some questionable decisions. Included here are the municipalities of Skenderaj, Mitrovica and Gjlani that are present on the AKP's list of usurpers. Despite incomplete data on the addresses of those listed on the “black list” of AKP, the Justice in Kosovo team managed to find and talk to some of them that allegedly occupy properties in Deçan and Junik. During their research, the Justice in Kosovo team identified when municipalities as well as state and public authorities were called usurpers. According to the law, municipalities do not have the right to rent or give the public properties for private use.
- **The Impact on the Courts** - On March 19, 2016, in an exclusive interview for Justice in Kosovo, Head of EULEX Gabriele Meucci criticized the declarations of Minister of Justice Hajredin Kuçi, as well as the campaign for protected witnesses in Kosovo. Meucci said that he felt uncomfortable when he saw a declaration made by Minister of Justice Hajredin Kuçi about a decision of the court. He also expressed that the declarations of Kuçi made during a television interview regarding the conviction of ex-KLA commander Sami Lushtaku were not in accordance with the situation in Kosovo. The declarations of Kuçi resulted in the cancelation of the regular meetings of the Board for rule of law among EULEX. Meucci also added that in order to guarantee a judicial system, judges and prosecutors should not feel threatened and should not be under pressure from politics, government officials, parliament or from any other political body.
- **The Denied Right of Women** - On March 25, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the investigations into a property dispute between a husband and wife in Peja and the efforts to deny women rights to make decisions regarding the family property. In the featured case, the couple's house in Peja became the root of dispute between the couple, which now lives in Germany, since Ziza, the wife, claims that her husband did not consult her at all when he decided to sell the house last summer. This edition of Justice in Kosovo included the exclusive interview with Ziza Mehaj, as well as interviews with other relevant institutions. Luljeta Demolli from the Center for Gender Studies shows the small number of women who own the property. Also, she stresses that according to recent surveys, only 16 per cent of women in Kosovo have properties on their names, and since 2004, there have been almost no measures taken in terms of heritage. In addition, Kushtrim Kaloshi from the ATRC organization shows that the number of women who accuse men in court in matters of inheritance is growing.

APRIL

2016

- Abuse of the Abandoned Children - On April 1, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an exclusive investigation that showed how abandoned children are being abused in Kosovo. This several-week-long investigation revealed details about suspicions of mistreatment of the children that were abandoned by their biological parents. Gathered evidence indicate negligence and ignorance on the legal procedures throughout the housing of children in foster families. The findings from the Justice in Kosovo investigation were alarming when it was found out that a seven-month-old baby girl that was placed with a temporary foster family had been hospitalized three times at the University Clinical Center with serious health conditions. The doctors indicated suspicions of malnutrition and pulmonary aspiration. Ministry of Social Welfare official Magbule Koci told Justice in Kosovo that they would start an investigation to see what has actually happened with the case of the seven-month-old baby.
- The Expulsion of Investors - On April 8, 2016, Justice in Kosovo revealed how the decisions of central institutions, such as those of Privatization Agency of Kosovo, do not have authority in the municipality of Ranillug. The show also broadcast the interview with Naim Demolli, who reported that he cannot use the 33 hectares of the land he bought since the municipality did not give him given approval. Demolli had competed with another individual in 2013 to buy 33 hectares of agricultural land on the municipality of Ranillug from the Privatization Agency of Kosovo on the 59th wave of privatization. Demolli had gone to the directorate of Urban Planning and Cadaster in the municipality of Ranillug to transfer the property to his name. However, this municipality, even after meeting with mayor, refused to do so with the excuse that this land is preserved for municipal interest.
- Conflict of Interest - On April 15, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the investigations regarding the suspicions of a high official of Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) being involved in a conflict of interest. The investigation involves the manager of TAK in the region of Mitrovica, who for several years exercised a parallel function as a chairman on the board of a waste management company in Mitrovica called "Uniteti" without permission of the TAK managers. In addition, in the interview with Justice in Kosovo, Ukshin Rrecaj admitted that he held two job positions but in the end he decided to resign from one of them because it is not allowed by the TAK ethics code.
- Airport Security - On April 22, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the investigation that revealed how Prishtina airport security is managed by an employee with a past criminal record. This several-week-long investigation proved how Ilmi Lushtaku, a security staff member at Prishtina's Airport, had been in prison for five months after being sentenced by the court for the criminal offence of causing a minor bodily injury. As Justice in Kosovo reported, Lushtaku, after being released from prison, returned to his work in airport without any slightest problem. For Adem Gashi from the Prishtina International Airport, the fact that Lushtaku had problems with the law and served a prison sentence does not possess a problem for the maintenance of security in this airport. According to him, the workplace of Lushtaku has been changed and now he does not have any access to the red security zone.
- EULEX Raids - On 30 April 2016, the team of Justice in Kosovo filmed raids carried out by EULEX and the Kosovo Police in the houses of Azem Syla and other suspects of this case. Justice in Kosovo also broadcast an interview with EULEX investigators regarding the criminal history and the suspicions of the prosecution for a group, in which Azem Syla, the former commander of the General Staff of KLA and former deputy of the Kosovo Assembly, is also a part. During this operation, EULEX investigators spoke to Justice in Kosovo about the reasons for the raids and the means of how investigators and prosecutors managed to provide evidence to conduct raids. Alan Edwards, head of the EULEX investigations, in an exclusive interview for Justice in Kosovo declared that every individual in this case of alienation of property has had their role inside the criminal group, including Azem Syla.

MAY

2016

- **Bargains at the Prosecution** - On May 6, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the results of a five-month investigation that provided evidence dealing with serious suspicions of corruption in the Basic Prosecution of Prizren. The show brought support for accusations of corruption against the serious crimes prosecutor in Prizren, Bajram Hamitaga. Witnesses spoke about the requests of intermediaries by the prosecutor, and of bribery in order to close a case of attempted murder. Granit Paçarizi, accused of attempted murder, spoke to Justice in Kosovo about the moment in which and the reasons why he accused the prosecutor from Prizren, Bajram Hamitaga, of bribery. In an exclusive investigation, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the footage of negotiations between the driver of the prosecution and the Paçarizi family, where Bajram Hamitaga, the prosecutor of Prizren, requested for the Paçarizi family to have the possibility to prevent the bribe from being public.
- **Bargains at the Prosecution 2** – On May 13, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the second part of the bribery investigations at the prosecution office in Prizren, bringing forward other details and evidence of meetings between the prosecutor Bajram Hamitaga and the Paçarizi family. In this edition of Justice in Kosovo, the meetings with the Paçarizi family where Hamitaga was given a tent for his yard, as well as other services from the family, such as repairing the lawnmower, were discussed. According to the law, prosecutors are not allowed to receive favors from individuals who are being legally prosecuted. This edition also analyzed how the state prosecution was notified about the public declarations made for corruption, as well as the decision of the prosecutor Hamitaga to ultimately not handle the cases of the Paçarizi family.
- **Sekiraqa Case** – On May 20, 2016, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an exclusive interview with Andrew Carney, the international prosecutor of the Sekiraqa case. This edition presented a chronological summary of key events that accompanied the Sekiraqa case from the post-war period up until his surrender in 2012. Also, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an unpublished interview that Enver Sekiraqa exclusively made with our team during the time he was on the run, just a few days before his surrender to EULEX. During the interview, Carney highlighted that the trial of Enver Sekiraqa was a murder case completely based on fact. Furthermore, when asked about whether he was pleased with the verdict of 37 years in prison for Sekiraqa and 35 years for Arben Berisha, Carney answered that he believed it was correct that Sekiraqa was not to be sentenced less than Berisha, since he was the instigator and the organizer of the murder.
- **Law on Inheritance** – On May 27, 2016, this edition of Justice in Kosovo investigated the negligence of women's rights regarding the Inheritance Law. Throughout several interviews, the elders of customary law and legal experts talked about the necessary need to change the Law on Inheritance and provide a legal order in which women are equal to men. While the Law of Inheritance came into force in 2004 and was regarded as a law in conformity with the highest modern European standards, the Justice in Kosovo team found that the Kosovo's current laws have a lot of defects. The interviewed lawyers considered the inheritance law to be only good on paper, while others agreed that this law in many cases discriminates women with regard to inheritance. The main remark lies in the fact that the adopted laws do not match the customary laws, which are still broadly applied in many regions of Kosovo. In an interview for "Justice in Kosovo," Adem Hoxha, an expert on customary law in Peja, explained that the customary law does not consider men and women as equal. According to these laws, women are not entitled to inherit property. Hoxha explained how, even to this day, women in the family are threatened by the men in the family to not claim their part of the inheritance.

JUNE

2016

- **Witnesses of terrorism:** This edition of Justice in Kosovo told the exclusive story of the guard of the Badovc Lake who discovered the plans of ISIS worshipers in Kosovo while they were filming propagandistic videos in this lake. This witness described how he managed to discover the plans of the five arrested individuals and the police were notified about the suspicious presence of the individuals near this lake. In an interview with Justice in Kosovo, the witness also spoke about the pressure that is put on him and his family to change his declarations in the court. He also talked about the fear that something might happen to him after his testimony against the suspected group.
- **Women's renouncement:** This edition of Justice in Kosovo broadcast exclusive interviews with experts and lawyers who spoke about the reasons that according to them contribute to Kosovar women giving up their inheritances. As Justice in Kosovo reported before, women in Kosovo are giving up their right to inheritance and a very large number of women in Kosovo do not inherit property from their parents. This is believed to be the reason why only 16 per cent of the properties in the state are registered to women. "Justice in Kosovo's" investigation showed how factors such as tradition and rejection from the family circle are not addressed in the current laws in force, according to experts and lawyers. These are some of the leading causes preventing women from claiming their shares of property.

SEPTEMBER

2016

- **The Mayor's palace:** On September 2, Justice in Kosovo revealed how the mayor of Shtime had bought a property where a park was supposed to be built.
- **The state's failure to control cars:** On September 9, Justice in Kosovo revealed how the state institutions failed to control the Technical Control Centers for cars. The investigation revealed that the Ministry of Infrastructure and the Ministry of Trade and Industry, for 12 years could not manage to control the equipment of the center for the technical control of cars. The program revealed that only 3 out of 105 centers for technical control of cars obeyed the law for safety and communication.
- **Justice for usury:** On September 16, Justice in Kosovo revealed the story of the suicides of two boys from the Mehana family in Mitrovica and how the deaths related to a case of usury.
- **Suspicious privatization in Kamenica:** On September 23, Justice in Kosovo revealed that there are suspicions of abuse during the process of privatization of the former enterprise "Hotel Mineral".
- **DNK investigation, 8 thousand innocent people in jail -** On September 30, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an investigation that revealed that more than 8,000 people had been wrongfully imprisoned. As Justice in Kosovo revealed, the Constitution states that misdemeanors cannot be sentenced with prison sentences; however the basic courts had given prison sentences to more than 8,000 people. Once this investigation was out, the Appeal Court called all Basic Courts to stop executing these decisions.

OCTOBER

2016

- **Panicked judiciary:** On October 14, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the second part of the investigation that revealed that more than 8,000 people had been wrongfully imprisoned over the past 10 years. Interviews with judiciary representatives show that the judiciary is in panic mode and that this scandal will impact the way citizens look at the judiciary.
- **War investigations:** On October 21, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the program for the arrest and detainment of the regional police director in Mitrovica, Nehat Thaci, in Serbia for alleged war crimes.
- **Prosecutor has lunch with defendant:** On October 28, Justice in Kosovo revealed that prosecutor Visar Musa had lunched with the defendant in a case that he was prosecuting. The prosecutor claims that he didn't know that the person he was having lunch with was the defendant of the case; nonetheless, he resigned.

NOVEMBER

2016

- **Crime in Bellanica:** On November 4, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an investigation on the death of Ramiz Hoxha in Bellanica in 1998. Witnesses were interviewed and said that masked people were wearing clothes with KLA emblems when they kidnapped Hoxha.
- **Crime in Bellanica, pt 2:** On November 18, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the second part of the investigation on the death of Ramiz Hoxha. Fatmir Limaj, Kosovo MP, has been indicted for this crime. He told Justice in Kosovo that he has been indicted for this crime several times but there is no evidence and he was acquitted every time.
- **Judiciary people hide taxes:** On November 25, Justice in Kosovo revealed that members of the judiciary system have hidden the money they gain from rent from the Tax Administration.

DECEMBER

2016

- Ali Rexha's testimony: On December 2, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an interview with a special prosecutor Ali Rexha.
- Slobodan Gavric's confession: On December 9, Justice in Kosovo interviewed Slobodan Gavric, a Serbian citizen who has been sentenced to 11 years in jail on terrorism charges. He was caught with 12 kilograms of explosives near the American Embassy in Prishtina.
- Usurpation of Post property: On December 16, Justice in Kosovo broadcast an investigation that showed how the company "Rukolli", property of Rustem Rukolli—coordinator of defense of the former Skenderaj Mayor Sami Lushtaku—was illegally using the property of Kosovo Post since 2010.
- Best of 2016: On December 30, Justice in Kosovo broadcast the best investigations of 2016.

2016

FAST FACTS

Frequency: **Weekly, Fridays at 10:30pm.**

Investigative
Reports / Analysis: **37**

Exclusive Police
Reports: **35**

Fans on
Facebook: **51,288 fans**



MEDIA PRODUCTION

Web Production

KALLXO.com

(FROM 2013 TO DATE)

KALLXO.com is an anti-corruption platform in which Internews Kosova collaborates with BIRN to offer citizens the opportunity to report corruption, fraud, conflicts of interest, and irregularities within public services. BIRN journalists contribute to this platform with daily news and investigations.

Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë

(FROM 2011 TO DATE)

During 2016, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë continued as an important investigative journalism portal, which has published investigations and detailed analyses on a weekly basis since its launch in September 2011. The paper has continued to specialize in “follow-the-money” techniques of investigative journalism and has published several ground-breaking investigations that expose links between Kosovo institutions and businesses.

February 2016

On February 10, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that a charity organization founded to help poor people in Kosovo is facing legal challenges regarding unpaid taxes and criminal charges after it violated the laws regulating NGOs.

On February 11, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported the irregularities in the Regional Water company “Prishtina”, which fired the current head of board and re-installed the previous one, thus going against the wishes of the international donors of this company.

On February 16, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that in one village in Klina, the sewage runs freely through the village and pollutes the potable water.

March 2016

On March 2, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that Fevzi Berisha, member of the Directing Council at the University of Prishtina, was promoted with a paper that has never been published.

On March 4, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported about tendering procedures in Northern Kosovo and RAD company of Radule Stevic from Zvecan being the top company in public tenders there.

On March 24, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that more than 50 Kosovars risk going to jail if they are convicted of criminal acts related to the war in Syria and Iraq, but experts warned that imprisoning these returnees would not combat violent extremism.

April 2016

On April 26, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that the Municipality of Prizren had paid 2,648 euros for fixing the mayor's car.

May 2016

On May 7, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that despite the fact that two people have been sentenced for participating in an alleged terrorist group in Syria, the so called ‘Harausham’, no institution can give evidence of its existence. One of the defendants says that he does not know how the prosecution came up with this organization.

On May 25, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported about the terrorism trials resulting in verdicts based on unserious or inexistent evidence, raising suspicions that there are politically motivated cases to clear Kosovo's image in the world.

On May 31, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that in Ferizaj, there is an office of the People's Front for cultivating the work of comrade Enver Hoxha, where communists in Ferizaj honor Hoxha's life and work, despite his shady legacy.

June 2016

June 16, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that the rector of University of Prishtina, Marjan Demaj, was allegedly academically promoted despite insufficient published papers. Demaj has four papers in total in his CV, and one of them was published in a fraudulent journal.

July 2016

On July 21, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that Dr. Selim Bezeraj, chair of the department of history, plagiarized his PhD paper, and the same one was published in a journal.

On July 25, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that a number of tenders under 1,000 euros were given to a company owned by the wife of an IT official in the municipality of Dragash.

On July 26, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that a doctor in QKUK refused to provide a child with treatment outside of the country, saying that the child had no chance to survive regardless of the treatment.

August 2016

On August 30, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that professor Dr Selim Bezeraj not only has plagiarized his PhD thesis, but that he had also lied about the paper being accepted in a journal for publishing, even falsifying the signature.

September 2016

On September 7, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that the Kosovo Privatization Agency needed to do the feasibility study for Trepca in a period of 52 days. If the law for Trepca is not published in the official newspaper of the government by November 1, the company will be liquidated.

On September 26, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the Kosovo Privatization Agency signed three annex-contracts with the company “Security Code”, which is owned by the brother of Sami

Lushtaku, mayor of Skenderaj. The annex-contracts were signed without a public tender and are valued at around 700 thousand euros.

On September 28, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that in the tender for car plates, the companies participating in the tender process complained about the company which won the tender was more expensive than the others, costing about 500,000 euros.

On September 28, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that professor Dr. Drita Kongjeli had copied part of the paper written by her former student Florin Aliu, now a PhD student.

October 2016

On October 16, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the KPA had sold 54 hectares of land in Obiliq for 370 thousand euros. However, now that these properties will be used by KEK for mining, this enterprise will be forced to pay around 2 million and 800 thousand euros for the same land.

On October 26, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the dean of the Faculty of Economics and his colleague Justina Shiroka Pula have published academic papers in a fraudulent journal.

On October 31, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the Municipality of Peja signed a contract worth 680 thousand euros with the "Conex Group" company, whose owner has been sentenced by the Basic Court of Prishtina for falsifying documents. The Municipality of Peja

said that they did not know that the owner had been sentenced, however they were notified by the reviewing expert of Procurement Reviewing Body ten days before the contract was signed.

November 2016

On November 14, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the World Bank had broken its own rules and contributed to the suffering of hundreds of Kosovars who were forced to leave their homes to make way for a coal mine.

On November 25, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë revealed that the former dean of the Faculty of Economics, Skender Ahmeti, had two academic papers in fraudulent journals.

On November 28, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that the Municipality of Decan had violated the law about a property costing one million euros. They had exchanged 44 hectares of land for 37 acres of land in the center of the city, saying that they wanted to build a school there. They did not build the school, but gave it with concession for skyscrapers with the purpose of gaining one million euros.

On November 29, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported that Shpresa Hoxha, pro-dean of the Faculty of Economics, has listed 62 scientific papers on his CV, even though most of them were articles published in daily newspapers.

December 2016

On December 23, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë reported about an academic, Mentor Sopjani, who had published 13 research papers, and the University of Prishtina did not promote him to professor, even though he is qualified.

2016

FAST FACTS

Unique Visitors:
674,074

Unique Visitors:
450,030

Page views:
765,080

Daily Visits:
2,090

Facebook fan page:
250,422 fans

Twitter:
8806 followers

PRISHTINA INSIGHT

(from 2008 to date)

After seven years in print, Prishtina Insight went online in February 2016 in order for PI's readers to have access to the best journalism from Kosovo in English wherever they are. The following are the highlights and some of the most read stories of 2016:

- On February 20, Prishtina Insight wrote about a Facebook status that Prime Minister Isa Mustafa wrote after an online petition circulated for the withdrawal of US Ambassador Delawie following his remarks on the crisis in the Assembly of Kosovo, which raised the ire of Kosovars when he

called the opposition's behavior in the Assembly on Friday the 19th "disgusting." Mustafa wrote a convoluted status calling the petition's creator "a terrorist" and other petitioners "women who have grazed all possible funds from the West."

- On February 22, Prishtina Insight published an op-ed by Hana Marku, who wrote an open letter to the US Ambassador over his reaction to the crisis in Parliament.

On April 8, Prishtina Insight revealed that the Podesta Group, a lobbying firm contracted by the Thaci Government in 2012, has been linked to companies implicated in the Panama Papers.

- On April 22, Prishtina Insight published a feature story in which one of our correspondents tested the limits of the Kosovo-Serbia agreements on a bureaucratic roller-coaster of a trip to Romania through Serbia.

- On May 17, Prishtina Insight published a photo gallery of the IDAHOT march for LGBT rights in Prishtina.

On July 15, Prishtina Insight wrote about the Pokemon Go craze reaching Kosovo.

On July 23, Prishtina Insight reported that amidst the nine victims of the July 2016 attack in Munich, three of them were Kosovo citizens.

- On September 14, Prishtina Insight wrote about a clash between two hip-hop cliques, one from Albania and the other from Kosovo, in which two people were wounded and four were arrested.

- On November 11, Prishtina Insight wrote an op-ed on the death of an opposition activist in detention.

- On December 6, Prishtina Insight wrote about Kosovo's education system ranking as one of the countries with the lowest performances in math, science and reading, in OECD's PISA education assessment.

2016

PI FAST FACTS

News:

212

Features:

79

Opinions:

80

Guide:

18

Facebook fan page:

5,789 fans

Twitter:

2,043



Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice

(BI from 2006 to date and BTJ from 2011 to date)

BIRN Kosovo is part of the regional team that produces Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice, the region's leading online source of news and in-depth analysis with a regional and local context, the latter with a focus on war crimes trials.

In 2016, BIRN's journalists produced 3,260 news pieces, and 770 premium articles (271 analysis, 102 comments, 184 features, 80 interviews, 44 investigations, 96 profiles).

Balkan Insight's Google Analytics records show that domestic and international readers had an even greater interest in published articles than in the previous year. In the stated period Balkan Insight had 6,250,000 page views, out of which 2,035,894 were unique visitors. 45 per cent of visitors return (1,632,886), and 55 per cent are new visitors (1,998,075).

The countries from which Balkan Insight had the most visits were: United States, UK, Serbia, Macedonia, Australia, Kosovo, Canada, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Albania.

In the past year BIRN's web team was dedicated to promoting content on various social networks, which significantly increased the number of Facebook "likes" on Balkan Insight's page, from the last year's 36,560 to 61,552. Balkan Insight's Twitter profile went from 18,000 followers to 24,200 followers. The two most important and successful social media channels for 2016 were Facebook and Twitter, with the vast majority of traffic to the website coming via Facebook (82.17 per cent).

Overall, social media accounted for 928,064 sessions on Balkan Insight in 2016, which is 25.56 per cent of the total number of sessions (3,630,961). This is an increase from 2015 of 5.86 per cent.

In 2016 the Balkan Transitional Justice programme published 770 articles, out of which 178 were analyses. These articles are published in four languages.



Fejzullah hasani

Head of Supreme Court

"I would like to congratulate your monitoring staff for their contribution in monitoring the work of courts, since by monitoring this segment, they are able to detect even the errors we consider technical. Your work in addressing these problems has had an impact on avoiding or improving at least a few cases."

MONITORING AND ADVOCATING

BIG DEAL: Monitoring the implementation of the Kosovo-Serbia Agreements

BIRN Kosovo in partnership with other local non-governmental organisations from Kosovo and Serbia monitors every agreement made between Kosovo and Serbia since the Brussels Agreement was reached.

More concretely, BIRN Kosovo partnered with Internews Kosova, the Belgrade-based BIRN Serbia and the CEAS as well as ACDC based in North Mitrovica to monitor the level of implementation of each of the agreements to see how they affected ordinary citizens. The results were published in stories throughout the year and in comprehensive reports measuring the progress reached. During 2016, BIRN Kosovo and BIRN Serbia wrote 48 articles, investigations, lengthy features and opinions on the agreements implementation written by Albanian, Serb and international authors. Topics covered included: Implementation of the freedom of movement agreement; implementation of the agreement on the telephony (Kosovo country code); the dialogue's stalemate as the Kosovo Police director was arrested in Serbia; pension rights for Kosovo citizens; acceptance of Kosovo/Serbian documents in the other country; freedom of movement for Kosovo Serbs, et cetera.



Public Procurement:

Under the auspices of the project for monitoring public services and public expenditures, BIRN has monitored the announcements of public contracts in all public institutions of Kosovo. Monitoring was followed by further research and reporting of the key findings immediately after the cases were disclosed to media. Monitoring of public expenditures through public procurement is of crucial importance. Such a process can identify shortcomings in the content as well as technical, procedural and administrative aspects so that improvements can be made.

As a result of this research BIRN published the “Annual Public Procurement Monitoring Report: Tenders of Endearment” in June 2016.⁷⁹ BIRN’s report contains the most significant cases of suspected misuse of public funds through public procurement.

BIRN has therefore summed the statistical part of all announcements published in the Kosovo Public Procurement webpage, reported on the court hearings for the misuse of tenders and has offered recommendations on how to reduce the negative phenomena in this area.

The report has gathered the findings of 169 contractual authorities by dividing them into the following main categories: Municipalities, Independent Institutions, Public Enterprises, Ministries, Independent Agencies, and Office of the Prime Minister, Kosovo Assembly, and the Presidency.

Another point worth mentioning is that budget institutions disregard remarks and opinions issued by the Anti-Corruption Agency in Kosovo. In accordance with the law on preventing conflict of interest, this agency is obliged to submit recommendations on canceling the procurement activities when the law is breached, and has so far submitted 65 opinions. However, these have not been taken into consideration by the institutions that fall into the categories listed by this report. Concrete shortcomings have been found in major capital projects, tenders offered to relatives of political officials, and not-published contract announcements hidden by more than 90 per cent of public institutions in Kosovo.

The findings and recommendations of BIRN for the upcoming years thus raise alarm that there is a need for increasing transparency and reducing corruption by depoliticizing the court of tenders, strengthening the function of the Procurement Review Body, increasing the human capacities, offering adequate training to procurement officials, and centralizing the procurement without damaging the competition.

Judiciary:

For the ninth year in a row, BIRN continued monitoring trial proceedings in Basic Courts, the Court of Appeals, the Supreme Court and the Constitutional Court.

The monitoring covered regular courts in 26 Kosovo municipalities (Basic, Appeals and Supreme Court) 689 court sessions were monitored during 2016.

On May 13, 2016, BIRN launched the 2015 Annual Court Monitoring Report, which consists of the information that was collected through monitoring courts during 2015, and a long analysis on the problems of the palace of justice. The Palace of Justice is a building sponsored by the EU, which houses the prosecution and the courts of Prishtina, the Appeal Court, the Supreme Court, et cetera. This building was very important to unify the judiciary in one place and make it more accessible for citizens. However, since it has been inaugurated the building has had many problems, such as flooding, elevators being broken, poor ventilation, heating and cooling. The report was launched through a roundtable where the most significant actors of the justice system were present. They were provided with a draft of the report in advance in order to provide feedback prior to the event. The report is available for download, free of charge, on the website of BIRN in English, Albanian and Serbian. BIRN’s monitoring reports on the justice system in Kosovo have built their reputation through providing credible data and well-researched recommendations.

Among the shortcomings noted in the report was the problem that the Palace of Justice, whose construction started on 3 June 2011, was planned to be finished within a 24-month period, meaning in 2012 but became operational only in 2015. Still there were several many problems with the Palace of Justice, with elevators getting stuck and the Palace being flooded whenever it rains. The project was planned based on the old law on judiciary. Back then, the internal arrangement of courts was different from the current one, which entered into force in 2013. Thus, a few judicial institutions were left out from this Palace.

79. http://kallxo.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/06/BIRN-RAPORT_NDER-ME-TENDER_alb-pdf



Training and Media Development

BIRN organized one intensive training to build capacities of local Serbian journalists in Kosovo as a part of Media for All project. The training was held in Prishtina from May 5 to 7, and was facilitated by Matt Robinson, editor of the BIRN fellowship, and Ivan Angelovski, BIRN investigative journalist. The trainers offered their insight and expertise in investigative journalism and other topics such as legal frameworks for journalism, access to public documents, building TV investigations, et cetera.



ON-THE-JOB TRAINING

BIRN regularly holds on-the-BIRN regularly holds on-the-job trainings with the purpose of enhancing the capacities of monitors to identify specific issues related to the delivery of public services and court monitoring. On-the-job training was also provided to new monitors who joined BIRN in 2016.

In the scope of Media for All project, BIRN offered on-the-job trainings for journalists who are in the process of doing their investigations for this project.

On January 15th, BIRN Kosovo organized a training for photographing with cell phones, so that the entire staff can be prepared to capture instances of importance with cell phones for the sake of evidence.

On March 1st, BIRN Kosovo organized a training for its staff on how to use 360 cameras since they have become an important part of reporting at all times and for better transparency from all corners.

On April 29th, BIRN Kosovo organized a training on protection against fire for its staff so that security measures can be well managed at all times.

From May 5th until May 7th, BIRN Kosovo organized an intensive training for five Kosovo Serb journalists on investigative journalism and access to public documents in order to strengthen the ability to obtain necessary information on a regular basis.

On June 28th, Jeta Xharra, executive director of BIRN Kosovo, offered a training on investigative journalism for journalists in Macedonia.

On September 30, BIRN held a training on journalism. The session was held by Andrew Grey, former editor in Reuters and BIRN Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence.

On October 24, BIRN staff was trained on the use of the new operating system of the platform for reporting corruption at KALLXO.com.

Apart from these trainings, BIRN Kosovo was also involved in education, where an agreement with the University of Prishtina's Department of Journalism Studies was signed. The agreement includes offering internship opportunities to the students of the University. During 2016, 15 students in total completed three-month internships at BIRN Kosovo. Out of those 15 students, four of them had an extended internship which lasted for six months, where in the end, two of them were promoted and currently work as employed journalists at our premises.

Improving justice reporting:

BIRN provided continuous on-the-job training for its staff to professionally conduct research and investigative reports about the performance of judicial institutions. The training equipped our staff with the necessary skills to conduct better and more ethical reporting and research, as well as improved writing and production of TV reports.



Blerim Isufaj

Head of Kosovo
Prosecutorial Council

“From the position of the Head of KPC (Kosovo Prosecutorial Council), I positively evaluate the efforts of BIRN to emphasize the developments in the judicial system throughout court monitoring and reporting on the irregularities within the system.”



Aleksandër Lumezi

State Chief-Prosecutor

“BIRN reports have provided evidence on all the flaws of the judicial and prosecutorial council, and I hope that they will not occur again in the future.”



SUMMER SCHOOL FOR INVESTIGATIVE JOURNALISM:

From August 21 to 27, Albulena Sadiku, Faith Bailey, Visar Prebreza and Kreshnik Gashi from BIRN Kosovo attended BIRN's Summer School of Investigative Reporting in Konjic, Bosnia and Herzegovina, which was organized by BIRN. They were trained by Blake Morrison, investigative projects editor at Reuters in New York, Miranda Patrucic - lead investigative reporter with the Center for Investigative Reporting in Sarajevo and the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project, OCCRP, Crina Boros, a watchdog reporter specialized in data journalism, transparency laws and cross-border reporting, Martin Kaiser, a three-times winner of Pulitzer price, Paul Myers from the BBC, Lawrence Marzouk from BIRN, and Jamez Mintz, Adjunct Professor at Toni Stabile Center for Investigative Journalism.

MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

Access to public documents: During 2016, BIRN Kosovo continued to work on monitoring and testing the implementation of the law on access to public documents. Most of the official requests that were sent to public institutions had to do with public expenditures, CVs of senior officials prior to or after their appointments, minutes of board meetings, lists of beneficiaries of privatization tenders and public contracts.

During 2016, 38 official requests to the public institutions were submitted. What characterized this year was BIRN's legal victory against the Prime Minister's Office and Prosecutorial Council for access to public documents. The first case which was against Prime Minister's Office followed a three-year battle to gain access to government travel expense documents, leading to the victory of BIRN over the Kosovo Prime Minister's Office by a court in Prishtina.⁸⁰ With the second presented case, BIRN won a legal case against Kosovo Prosecutorial Council. Kosovo's Court of Appeals issued a final verdict in favour of BIRN's requests to make final decisions on disciplinary cases against prosecutors available to the public. BIRN had requested access to files on disciplinary measures taken against Kosovo prosecutors, in accordance with Kosovo's Law on Access to Public Documents.⁸¹

KOSOVO FELLOWSHIP FOR JOURNALISTIC EXCELLENCE



During 2016, BIRN Kosovo organized the Kosovo Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence, where 10 investigations/reportages were produced:

- Edona Musa's story on textbooks that are provided for free by the government, and are not returned despite the guideline stating that they have to be returned by the parents. They are instead burned or binned, costing the Kosovo budget several million euros yearly.
- Pajtim Cuni and Vjosa Cerkini wrote about a unique phenomenon in Ferizaj, the Nerodime bifurcation where the river splits in two branches and flows into two seas.
- Leonora Aliu wrote about a thriving market in illegal abortion in Kosovo.
- Lulzim Ahmeti wrote about foreign investments in Kosovo and the draft-law on strategic investments.
- Sara Ostojic reported on the Albanian and Serbian language discrepancies in Kosovo laws, which result in many problems in the judiciary and daily life.
- Teuta Gashi reported on animal waste in Kosovo and the health hazard that it poses.
- Die Morina reported that people who graduated as university students in the '90s are getting lower pensions because the Ministry of Labor does not recognize those diplomas as qualifications.

⁸⁰. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/birn-wins-legal-case-against-kosovo-pm-s-office-10-29-2015>

⁸¹. <http://prishtinainsight.com/birn-wins-battle-kosovo-prosecutorial-council-appeals-court/>

- Visar Prebreza's wrote about illegal buildings built on socially owned land, and usurpation of buildings of public enterprises.

- Sanja Sovrlic wrote on the construction of a costly new municipal swimming pool in Leposavic.

- Valdete Osmani wrote about the Dardhishte residents in Obiliq who are stuck between the KEK power plant and its landfill, and who suffer daily from the biggest polluter in Kosovo, and the fact that institutions are not heeding their requests for relocation.

LEGAL AND ADVOCACY DEPARTMENT

Strategic litigation cases

BIRN jointly with the "Justice and the People" campaign held a roundtable on October 29th to declare their legal victory against the Prime Minister's Office for access to public documents.⁸² BIRN had requested access to documented foreign travel expenses of the former Kosovo PM Hashim Thaci, and the same information from the current Isa Mustafa government.

BIRN also requested the same information from six deputy prime ministers from the Thaci government and four deputy ministers of the current Mustafa government. The PM's office denied access to such information, arguing that it could infringe the privacy rights of public officials because invoices for food and drinks could reveal religious and dietary information about the individuals.

However the Prishtina court decided that this claim is unfounded because public officials' expenses are funded with money collected from taxpayers' money.

The "Justice and the People" campaign is implemented by the Advocacy Training and Resource Center (ATRC), the Center for Legal Aid and Regional Development (CLARD), and the law firm of Sejdiu & Qerkini, with support from the Public International Law & Policy Group (PILPG)

Legal follow-up of citizen reporting cases in Kallxo

KALLXO.com is an anti-corruption social media platform established in April 2012 by Internews Kosova in partnership with BIRN Kosovo. Since its launch, the KALLXO.com platform has received

5,408 reports from citizens who report on the basis that their reports will be followed up by two teams, a) teams of investigative journalists who will produce the media story and b) teams of legal people who will present the legal argument of the case to the relevant authorities.

The citizen reports are divided into five main categories: corruption, conflict of interest, elections, fraud, municipal services and other. Internews Kosova constantly reviews the cases reported on KALLXO.com and verifies them on a daily basis.

The reports that are sent to www.KALLXO.com are followed up by investigative teams who consist of monitors in the field, journalists, and then by the legal office.

When the reports are verified by court monitors and journalists, the legal office drafts an official legal complaint to the relevant authority that refers to the laws that were broken in that reported case, and attaches necessary documentation and proof to this complaint. As such this complaint goes directly and officially to the institution that needs to take measures for this breach to be addressed. BIRN has found that this methodology is causing many institutions to take measures because an official complaint, protocolled and backed by proof is more difficult to ignore than a media report.



Ambassador Jan BRAATHU

Head of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo

"The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) has demonstrated a persistent and uncompromising commitment to investigate journalism in Kosovo. Dedicated and responsible journalism is a pre-condition for public awareness, civic engagement and democratic decision-making. We in the OSCE Mission in Kosovo have benefited from joint collaboration with them on many initiatives, promoting transparency and access to information, media freedom and the safety of journalists. The Mission, in working with BIRN, looks forward to continuing to strive towards attaining a professional media environment."

82. <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/birn-wins-legal-case-against-kosovo-pm-s-office-10-29-2015>

Overall, during 2016, BIRN in cooperation with its partner Internews Kosova **followed up on 230 complaints backed by evidence**. In addition, due to the lack of response by relevant institutions, KALLXO.com increased the pressure by sending 27 confirmation-follow-up letters with additional information, after the initial complaints were not addressed, to these institutions:

LETTERS SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF PRISHTINA	1 LETTER SENT TO THE CHAMBER OF NOTARIES
2 LETTERS SENT TO THE ANTI-CORRUPTION AGENCY	1 LETTER SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF PEJA
5 LETTERS SENT TO THE OFFICE OF THE DISCIPLINARY PROSECUTOR	1 LETTER SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF KAMENICA
3 LETTERS SENT TO THE KOSOVO POLICE	1 LETTER SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF OBILIQ
3 LETTERS SENT TO THE STATE PROSECUTION	1 LETTER SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF RAHOVEC
3 LETTERS TO THE BASIC PROSECUTION OF GJILAN	1 LETTER SENT TO THE EDUCATION INSPECTORATE GJAKOVA
2 LETTERS SENT TO THE MUNICIPALITY OF KLINA	1 LETTER SENT TO THE BASIC PROSECUTION OF GJAKOVA

Out of 230 complaints, BIRN, received 109 answers. The following are the answers with the highest impact:

The Disciplinary Prosecutor has opened disciplinary investigations against Prosecutor Visar Musa and Judge Adem Shabani, after KALLXO.com reported that they dined with a defendant in a case that they were working on. Musa resigned, while for Shabani it was concluded that he had misbehaved.

BIRN sent a complaint to the Election Complaint and Appeal Panel for the elections in Drenas, and the commission ers in Gllasanelle were suspended for three years.

After BIRN reported about a prisoner being freed after a few hours in jail, the Disciplinary Prosecutor started disciplinary measures against Judge Elmaze Syka.

After BIRN reported that evidence and proof of the massacre in Krusha e Madhe are being destroyed, the State Prosecutor sent the case to the Special Prosecution, which deals with war crimes.

After BIRN reported that prosecutor Bajram Hamitaga was involved in racketeering, the Basic Prosecution in Gjilan raised an indictment against him.

After BIRN reported that a criminal case had reached the statute of limitations in Gjilan, the Disciplinary Prosecutor opened a disciplinary investigation against the Judge Emin Salihu.

After BIRN reported that Company "Rukolli" is usurping the property of Kosovo Post and Telekom, the case was sent to the Basic Prosecution of Prishtina.

BIRN KOSOVO

Awards:

Florina Ujupi, was awarded the 2nd place for reporting on the job market and employment in Kosovo. The award was given by the Kosovo Journalists Association and the Enhancing Youth Employment project.

Kreshnik Gashi, Ivan Angelovski, Petrit Çollaku and **Jelena Cosic**, won the 3rd place in EU Journalism in Serbia for a story revealing how a multi-million-dollar road construction contract was quietly handed to a consortium with little highway-building experience and linked to controversial Serbian businessman Zvonko Veselinovic.

The Justice in Kosovo show won the Best Television Story on Transparency and Anti-Corruption award, for a story composed by journalist Naim Krasniqi named “The Wrong Lunch” related to wrongdoings by prosecutors from Kosovo Prosecutorial Council.



BIRN KOSOVO

Partners and donors

BIRN Kosovo works with a large network of local civil society organizations in Kosovo, as well as regionally and internationally:

1. AAdvocacy Center for Democratic Culture – ACDC
2. Advocacy Training and Recourse Centre - ATRC
3. Balkan Green Fund
4. Center for Euro-Atlantic Studies - CEAS
5. Community Building Mitrovica, CBM
6. Crossing Bridges Productions
7. Dokufest
8. Forum for Civic Initiative
9. Group for Legal and Political Studies, GLPS
10. Initiative for Progress, NGO in Ferizaj
11. Institute for Advanced Studies, GAP
12. Institute for Development Policy, INDEP
13. Internews Kosova
14. KOSMA network of Serbian local TV stations
15. Mreza TV
16. NGO AKTIV
17. NGO Change, Gjilan
18. Public International Law and Policy Group (PILPG)
19. Radio Television 21
20. Radio Television of Kosovo
21. RTV Puls
22. Syri i Vizionit, Peja
23. TOKA

Regional partnerships

24. BIRN Bosnia and Herzegovina
25. BIRN Macedonia

26. BIRN Serbia
27. BIRRN Regional
28. OCCRP
29. TV Aldi, Presheve

International cooperation and partnerships

30. European Climate Foundation
31. Frontline Club
32. Saferworld
33. SCOOP
34. Sierra Club
35. Thomson Reuters Foundation

BIRN Kosovo is generously supported by the following donors:

- Austrian Development Agency
- Advocacy Training and Research Centre ATRC/ USAID
- Balkan Trust for Democracy
- BIRN Hub
- British Embassy
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (MOTT)
- European Union Office in Kosovo
- Foundation Wings of Hope
- Independent Journalist's Association of Vojvodina
- Kosovar Civil Society Foundation
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Radio Television of Kosovo
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- The Royal Netherlands Embassy
- UNDP

BIRN KOSOVO

Funding in 2016

Through 2016, BIRN continued to rely on the generous support of a wide range of Western governments, independent and public partners to sustain the organization's internal capacity and public impact. The BIRN team is deeply grateful to all of them for their loyal and unconditional support, which further strengthened BIRN's ultimate objective to serve as a watchdog, monitor the work of public institutions and support their reform on their path towards meeting the criteria and standards of the European Union.

As BIRN is looking forward to accomplishing its strategic long-term and short-term goals, it hopes to maintain, nurture and strengthen existing relationships with its key donors while continuing to broaden and deepen the funding base. A strong and growing base of support will be essential to continue our work and focus on

our main activities, including but not limited to the following:

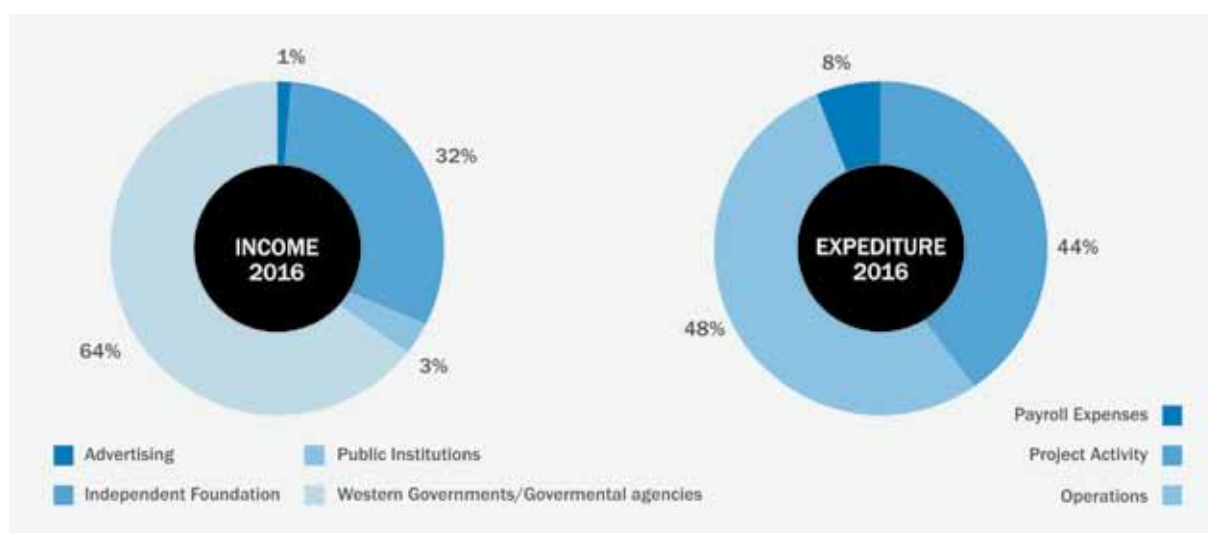
- Production of the weekly current affairs TV debate Jeta në Kosovë
- Systematic Monitoring of the performance of public services and production of Justice in Kosovo weekly TV program
- Production of municipal debates
- Publication of Balkan Insight, KALLXO.com, Prishtina Insight, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë and the Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence

Western Governments/ Governments and agencies/ Independent and Public Foundations

As in the past, BIRN's primary fAs in the past, BIRN's primary financial support came from partners in Western govern-

ments. Western governments' support continued to hold steady both in absolute and relative terms, representing 64 per cent of total funding. A majority of these donors have now provided grants also for the coming years, demonstrating their long-term commitment to and belief in our work. These partners are set to remain a key source of financial support, as we seek to expand cooperation with several of our key existing supporters and foster new relationships with others.

BIRN was also fortunate to count on the financial support of Independent Foundations and Public Institutions, which represent 32 per cent and about 3 per cent respectively of total organizational support during the 2016 fiscal year. Alongside **Western Governments, Independent Foundations and Public Institutions** continue to be a vital source of our support.





Donors are listed in alphabetical order:

- Austrian Development Agency
- Advocacy Training and Resource Center
- Balkan Trust for Democracy
- BIRN Hub
- British Embassy
- Charles Stewart Mott Foundation
- European Union Office in Kosovo
- Foundation Wings of Hope
- Independent Journalist's Association of Vojvodina
- Kosovar Civil Society Foundation
- National Endowment for Democracy
- Radio Television of Kosovo
- Rockefeller Brothers Fund
- Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
- The Royal Netherlands Embassy
- United Nations Development Programme

PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS

1. **Radio Television of Kosovo ("RTK")** has continued offering the space for broadcasting *Life in Kosovo* and *Justice in Kosovo* through 2016. BIRN signed an agreement for a contract which obliges RTK to pay for half of the production of the programmes but to this day, RTK is more than three years behind with payments to BIRN for its programming.

WESTERN GOVERNMENTS / GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES:

1. **Austrian Development Agency** - Among other donors that supported *Prishtina Insight's* publication is the Austrian Development Agency, ADA.

2. **National Endowment for Democracy (NED)** - The National Endowment for Democracy (NED) continued to support BIRN throughout 2016 with project such as "Promoting Transparency and Accountability of Local Government".

3. **The Royal Netherlands Embassy** - The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands, through the Royal Netherlands Embassy in Prishtina, awarded a four-year grant to support the project entitled "Reporting on Police and Procurement Issues."

4. **The European Union, represented by the European Union Office in Kosovo** - Strengthening of the Civil Society oversight on the rule of law system in Kosovo. The EU Office in Kosovo awarded a grant to BIRN to carry out a project which is a combination of public services monitoring and production of televised debates and report for the *Life in Kosovo* and *Justice in Kosovo* programmes, called "Monitoring of Public Services and TV debates."

5. **The European Union, represented by the European Union Office in Kosovo** - Media for All - The EU Office in Kosovo funds BIRN's program to develop independent, investigative, impartial, unbiased and publicly beneficial journalism in Kosovo. This program promoted democratic values through strengthening freedom of speech and independent media in Kosovo.

INDEPENDENT FOUNDATIONS

1. **Charles Stewart Mott Foundation (MOTT)** - Charles Stewart Mott Foundation supported BIRN with a general purpose grant which also finances the public service project as well as *Life in Kosovo*, *Justice in Kosovo* and *Prishtina Insight*.
2. **Rockefeller Brothers Fund** - The Rockefeller Brothers Fund was the first donor to help support and design the very successful project of the monitoring of public services, which began in 2008. It was initially funded only by RBF and then co-funded by other donors such as EU and Dutch government, which allowed for the project to produce *Justice in Kosovo*. This RBF support through 2016 as well brought the extending of the scope of the monitoring, in order to create room for public procurement monitoring. The RBF grant supported specifically the monitoring of courts, public procurement and implementation of the agreements signed between Serbia and Kosovo.
3. **Internews Kosovo** - BIRN Kosovo has also received some funds from Internews Kosovo in the scope of the partnership in implementing the Supporting Anti-Corruption Efforts in Kosovo supported by UNDP in Kosovo and for the production of TEMA televised debates supported by the British embassy in Prishtina.
4. **Kosovar Civil Society Foundation - KCSF** supported 10 Post-Election Live debates until the first three months of 2016.
5. **Advocacy Training and Resource Center - ATRC** supported BIRN's project of empowering women to seek their inheritance rights.
6. **Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency - SIDA** supported BIRN throughout 2016.
7. Throughout 2016, BIRN Kosovo has received funds from **BIRN Hub**, which also supports Balkan Insight and the Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence.
8. Independent Journalists Association of Vojvodina- a delegation from the European Union in Serbia supported a project named "Missing Rights - Finding Solutions".

ADVERTISING

BIRN Kosovo takes a very modest income from advertising, none of which is for profit and is used to pay the expenses of the operations of running outputs like gazetajnk.com and Prishtina Insight.

1. Prishtina Insight (PI) and Gazeta JNK- PI newspaper subscription and advertising PI and Gazeta JNK are around 1 per cent of total funds were generated as of December 31, 2016.



BIRN KOSOVO

CHALLENGES AHEAD

We are determined to strengthen the effectiveness of the programs we deliver, as well as our responsibility towards beneficiaries and donors. Considering that we run a courageous, unbiased media organization, the difficulty of doing so in Kosovo remains a challenge, especially when it comes to accusations where politics is involved and lack of transparency and accountability mar the majority of the public sector in Kosovo. The consequences thereafter cost us a high financial burden as well as a decrease in funding.

BIRN Kosovo's products such as *Life in Kosovo* and *Justice in Kosovo* for years now have had a cooperation with the public broadcaster RTK (Radio Television of Kosovo). This broadcaster receives and casts the programs produced by BIRN on a weekly basis but fails to pay their liabilities. BIRN yet takes record of the mutual experience and submits the shows, which have an impact on the betterment of the society. Such attitude is unfortunately not reciprocal. Therefore, the challenge of being a reporting platform and not being materialistically funded for the job done remains at stake. Regardless of the fact that RTK fails to implement the contract and being behind scheduled payments, BIRN believes it is in the public interest to air its programs on the public broadcaster, with the widest coverage in Kosovo.

Among many challenges, the courage of being a whistleblower can fall on the list as well, because as reported in one of the shows produced by *Life in Kosovo*, having the courage to notice and speak up about problems that take place in public institutions such as the Tax Administration, will cost the individual the headache of threats and blackmailing.

The problems appearing thereafter become even more worrisome, when we are left to see a responsible institution that continues business as usual despite the revelation of multi-million euro scandals condemned by diplomatic missions in the country.

BIRN was able to win a rather important case against the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council, which as a result granted the organization a crucial role towards achieving its goal on fighting for the transparency of public institutions, which is to have permanent access to read the disciplinary decisions by the prosecutors. The Court of Appeal on the decision stated that the right to have access to public documents is fundamental in order to have a democratic society as it holds the public authorities accountable about their actions for the sake of the civil society and the media. This served as a good example to have the challenges that are to be faced in the future, be easily solved, so that rights such as transparency should not be questioned.

Finally, journalism safety, like in many countries in the world, remains problematic in Kosovo as well. Journalists in Kosovo face attacks, threats and pressure. Considering the responsibilities they carry, the consequences are therefore fatal and worth-listing as serious challenges to be addressed. Even international missions call for extended freedom of media, since annually the number of attacks against journalists was about 60, and unfortunately the government's reaction towards this remains passive. Journalism deserves to be treated like all other occupations, where doing your job right, does not have to cost the person intolerable consequences.

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WHO ARE WE?

The Balkan Investigative Reporting Network (BIRN) is the leading investigative reporting organisation in the Balkans, and is a trusted and well-respected civil society actor in the region.

BIRN emerged in 2004 through a long-term media development project run by the UK-based Institute for War and Peace Reporting. Since 2005, it has worked as an independent non-profit media-training organisation in the Balkans. It specializes in developing and implementing investigative and analytical reporting projects, theoretical and practical training for local journalists, and capacity building of local and regional media.

The BIRN network consists of seven member NGOs in Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, Macedonia, Serbia, Romania, Albania and Bulgaria. It has an established editorial presence in Croatia and Montenegro.

BIRN Kosovo, in particular, specializes in organizing current affairs debates that have pushed boundaries in Kosovo by dealing with sensitive, hard-hitting and taboo-breaking topics, sometimes resulting in its journalists being threatened. These debates have pushed for public reform and contributed to increased levels of accountability among elected and appointed officials in post war Kosovo.

Starting with a staff of only three members in 2005, BIRN Kosovo has evolved into a leading media NGO, with a staff of 63 full-time and part-time employees and contributors at different times, which employs and nurtures the best investigative journalism talent in Kosovo.

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