



BIRN Kosovo
Annual Report
2022

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FOREWORD - JETA XHARRA



Jeta Xharra

Executive director - BIRN Kosovo

2022 will be remembered as a year between two eras: the end of the COVID-19 pandemic and the beginning of the Russian invasion of Ukraine. This year marks the one with the highest political fragility for our country since March 2004, due to the crisis in the North.

These were the themes that defined the year, but they were not the only ones. Developments continued to take place in the country, such as the adoption of emergency measures to overcome inflation, ensure electricity supply and provide assistance to employees. Another popular public debate was the strike in education and the law of wages, the vote in principle for the establishment of the Bureau for Confiscation of Assets, and the contradictions within political subjects, between them and in public, regarding the amendment of the Civil Code of Kosovo.

In terms of human rights, Kosovo faced alarming cases of attempted rape of minors, specifically the rape of an 11-year-old girl by five men, and the murder of women, all of which took place during the 16-day campaign against gender-based violence.

Our team of journalists, editors, court monitors, legal officers, and researchers followed these developments closely, investigating, seeking accountability from authorities, and filing cases at the public institutions. These efforts resulted not only in reporting but also in the arrests and convictions of culprits. Our team of producers, camera operators, audio and lights operators, editors, and graphic designers were there to ensure the delivery of quality media that provides credible, objective, and factual information to Kosovo citizens.

During 2022, BIRN Kosovo published a total of 172 televised debates and reports on KALLXOPërnime, covering stories that sparked public debate in the country. Some of the stories that resulted as most impactful are entitled: 12 series of “The Prosecution” TV programme; Usury File in Prizren; The judge negotiates the case & the judge decides on the wife’s case; Heroin trafficking network between Turkey and Kosovo Suspicious subsidies; Purchase of the Chief Prosecutor; How did the victim act towards the professor in Gjilan; and Stories about Pride.

In 2022, BIRN Kosovo continued to train the next generation of Kosovo journalists in tackling disinformation and fake news, phenomena that have surged in the Kosovo media landscape. The six journalism awards that BIRN won this year are additional proof of how impactful our work is in society. Our team’s work received recognition from local and international institutions who awarded BIRN Kosovo’s most vibrant journalists for stories on public procurement, corruption, and the protection of children’s rights. To note just a couple, the EU awarded three of BIRN Kosovo journalists and investigators with the first prize in the EU Investigative Journalism Awards 2022, and the Association of Journalists awarded one of the journalists at BIRN Kosovo with the “Web Story 2022” prize.

I would like to thank all 1,950 citizens who submitted reports via our KALLXO.com anti-corruption platform during 2022. Your reporting on injustices encountered led to published investigations that had an exceptional impact on society. What began as injustices reported by citizens became the subjects of investigation by our team of researchers and legal experts, ultimately leading to direct impacts. For example, an indictment was filed against a former minister accused of corruption by the Special Prosecution, indictments for criminal offenses of abuse of official position or authority were filed against two former municipal directors, more than ten senior public officials were arrested, and properties were seized following the “Brezovica” operation, and more than sixteen individuals were arrested and dozens of indictments featuring organized crime, corruption, and money laundering charges were initiated. Additionally, disciplinary proceedings were initiated against more than 11 individuals, out of which six were judges and five prosecutors. One judge and one prosecutor were suspended, one judge had their salary reduced, one public reprimand was issued for a prosecutor, one judge was suspended by the Judicial Council and his salary was reduced by 50% for 10 months, two judges were subjected to disciplinary proceedings, and a criminal investigation was initiated against a prosecutor by the Basic Prosecution in Peja. A state prosecutor was punished with a public reprimand by the Prosecutorial Council following BIRN’s complaints about failure to start working on time, and two contests were canceled for official positions - the director of RTK and a dentist position in Podujeva. These are only some of our accomplishments in the year 2022 that undoubtedly would not have occurred if one of you had not made a report on KALLXO.com.

I also thank all 61 members of my team for your hard work, and your families for bearing through your absences, which have allowed you to go above and beyond to make a real difference in the lives of Kosovars. Yet, your work has gone beyond mere reporting; it has made Kosovo a slightly fairer place to live.

Thus, I am extremely grateful to be surrounded by such a dedicated group of professionals in the office, where we share and co-produce everything with our partner organization, Internews Kosova.

Lastly, I thank all the donors, partners, and sponsors - both local and international - as well as our supporters, friends, and collaborators who have our back. We hope to continue to be worthy of your support for many years to come.

BOARD MEMBERS & STAFF

BIRN regional board members:

Ana Petruševa

Member of the board, Country director, North Macedonia

Per Byman

Member of the board / Managing director at NRC Flüchtlingshilfe Deutschland

Robert Bierman

Member of the board / Chief revenue officer at News Deeply

Steve Crawshaw

Member of the board / Policy and advocacy director at Freedom from Torture

Tim Judah

Chair of the board / Journalist at The Economist

BIRN Kosovo Assembly of Members:

Albana Kasapi

Senior Broadcast Journalist/Output editor at BBC Global News

Dragana Nikolić Solomon

Head of the Assembly

Jehona Gjurgjeala

Executive director at TOKA

Jeta Xharra

Founding member

Kreshnik Gashi

Managing editor, Internews Kosova

Robert Wilton

Novelist / Translator / Coach

Visar Prebreza

Managing editor, BIRN Kosovo

BIRN Kosovo staff:

Adelina Ahmeti

Assistant editor/Journalist/Project coordinator

Albulena Sadiku Ismaili

Deputy executive director/Senior programme manager

Albulena Zeneli Jonuzi

Human resources/Finance officer

Altin Morina

Information technology assistant

Amire Qamili Çollaku

Journalist

Ana Ćup

Junior journalist

Arber Gashi

Marketing head

Ardita Zeqiri

Monitor/Investigative journalist

Arian Hyseni

IT manager/Technical staff coordinator

Arianit Keka

Junior journalist/Intern

Arita Suhodolli

Project manager

Arjana Berisha

Junior journalist/Researcher

Arlinda Mehmeti

Monitor/Junior researcher

Arnis Fushtica

Project assistant

Arta Sopi

Journalist

Behar Mustafa

Journalist/Researcher

Blendi Shaqiri

Camera operator/Video editor

Blerta Begisholli

Editor/Journalist

Bubulina Peni

Intern journalist

Deniz Sllavinja

Camera operator/Video editor

Diar Vuçetaj

Intern graphic designer

Diellëza Berisha

Junior journalist

Diellza Salihu

Project manager

Donika Elshani

Project Coordinator

Dorentina Kastrati

Deputy editor/Journalist/Project coordinator

Dorina Drançolli

Finance officer

Drenushë Ramadani

Project Coordinator/Journalist/Researcher

Dhurata Prokshi

Project Coordinator

Durim Shala

Camera operator/Video editor

Egzon Dahsyla

Journalist/Monitor

Elza Tullari

Monitor/Junior Researcher

Emirjeta Vllahiu

Journalist /Researcher

Era Hasani

Junior Monitor

Erolinda Uka

Monitor/Junior Researcher

Fjolla Bici

Junior Journalist

Fatrion Ibrahimimi

Producer

Hysen Gara

Stage technician/Office security officer

Ilirjana Hoti

Junior journalist/Researcher

Isa Vatovci

Journalist

Islam Berisha

Camera operator/Junior editor

Jeta Xharra

Executive director

Jetmir Hoxha

Camera operator/Junior video editor

Jeton Ispahiu

MCR producer/Camera operator/Editor

Kastriot Berisha

Monitor/Researcher/Legal officer

Labinot Leposhtica

Coordinator of court monitoring and the Legal Office

Laurant Berisha

Monitor/Junior Researcher

Medianë Halili

Journalist/Monitor/Researcher

Milena Maksimovic

Junior journalist

Mimoza Feraj

Finance officer

Naser Fejza

Camera operator/Video editor

Naser Sertolli

Editor/Journalist

Nuhi Shala

Researcher/Interpreter

Përparim Isufi

Managing Editor / Investigative journalist

Rinesa Osmanaj

Journalist/Junior researcher

Rrahman Ramaj

Procurement officer/Financial analyst

Shkodrane Dakaj

Junior journalist/Researcher

Suela Beka

Office maintenance assistant

Visar Prebreza

Managing editor

Vlera Shabani

Junior Journalist

Vyrtyte Gërvalla

Monitor/Researcher

Xheneta Murtezaj

Journalist/Monitor/Researcher

Yllka Hoxha

Human Resource and Finance Manager

Zgjim Sefa

Journalist/Junior researcher

Internews Kosova (I/KS) staff:

Antigonë Isufi

Monitor/Investigative journalist

Arbisa Shefkiu

Journalist/Monitor

Astrit Perani

Production assistant/Camera operator/Video editor

Besnik Krivanjeva

2D-3D Graphic designer/Camera operator/Video editor

Blerta Iberdemaj

Legal officer/Monitor/Researcher

Diellza Luzha

Monitor/Investigative journalist

Erdonita Ahmeti

Administrative and Finance assistant

Gentiana Ahmeti

Monitor/Journalist/Researcher

Granit Mavriqi

Social media editor/Graphic designer

Korab Gërdovci

Information and Technology Officer

Korab Gërdovci

Information and Technology Officer

Kreshnik Gashi

Managing editor/Journalist/Moderator

Labërie Leci

Assistant in projects and administration

Luljeta Pacolli Paloja

Administration and finance officer

Lum Ademi

Finance manager

Naim Krasniqi

Journalist/Researcher/Editor

Taulant Osmani

Deputy editor/Journalist/Project coordinator

Valdet Salihu

Producer/Camera operator/Video editor

Valon Fana

Journalist



MISSION & VISION

BIRN Kosovo is an independent non-governmental organization that seeks to provide momentum for the democratic transition in Kosovo by promoting and advocating for accountability, the rule of law, and policy reform within both public and private institutions. One of BIRN Kosovo's key goals is to maintain its position as the premier investigative and analytical journalism organization in Kosovo, continuing to report on the country's most pressing issues in politics, economics, and society. In particular, BIRN aims to act as a watchdog for public institutions, supporting the reforms required to further their path towards meeting EU criteria and the standards of the European Union. Through our televised debates, reports, and training on critical thinking and argumentation, BIRN Kosovo also encourages debate as a key source of knowledge, emancipation, and political culture.

Since starting with fewer than five staff members in 2005, BIRN Kosovo has evolved into a comprehensive media organization, employing journalists, editors, and editorial, administrative, and technical staff to produce high-quality investigative and analytical reporting. BIRN Kosovo now has a team of around 61 full-time professionals, as well as numerous local and international contributors who work on the development and implementation of ongoing programs.

METHODS & APPROACH

BIRN Kosovo employs various research methods, with the application of each method depending on the medium used. These mediums include fact-checking articles, investigative reports, televised debates, televised reports, and legal analyses.

The organization's overall approach is shaped by the following concepts:

Journalism that acts as a watchdog

All of BIRN Kosovo's outputs have one underlying objective: holding powerful actors accountable. Whether through hard-hitting interviews, televised debates, reports, or in-depth written investigations, the organization aims to unveil corruption and hold leaders accountable. Its philosophy remains to build a culture of media oversight in Kosovo using journalistic methods.

Journalism through fieldwork

BIRN Kosovo's team in 2022 consisted of 64 staff members and contributors: 12 technical staff, 23 journalists/editors, 13 administrative staff, 5 professional court monitors, and 11 interns. The organization is the only media outlet in the country that holds systematic municipal and electoral debates, enabling citizens to communicate with and question their political representatives.

Engaged journalism

BIRN Kosovo believes that effective journalism should not only generate reporting but also trigger real change. The organization established a Legal Office to combat indifference and inaction from local institutions in response to the issues we report on. The office submits cases to prosecution offices, complete with evidence collected by investigative reporters and court monitors.

Journalism that trains for excellence

BIRN Kosovo has become a hub for innovation, creativity, and high-quality journalism, cementing its position as a trendsetter in Kosovo's media landscape. The organization provides on-the-job training and workshops on topics such as TV production, investigative journalism, fact-checking, media ethics, public speaking, violent extremism and radicalization, as well as advocacy training on energy and environmental issues. Training beneficiaries include journalists, court monitors, researchers, local media workers, university and high school students, civil society activists, and officials from Kosovo's public institutions.

DIARY OF IMPACTS

BIRN Kosovo has always strived to promote freedom of speech, human rights, and democratic values in Kosovo and has remained an influential media organization throughout Southern and Eastern Europe. As a result of our diligent work in increasing accountability and transparency in state institutions, BIRN Kosovo remains the second most trusted institution in the country, after Kosovo Police.

Throughout 2022, BIRN Kosovo's media deliverables resulted in more than 100 direct short-term and long-term impacts on wider society. As a result of our monitoring and reporting efforts:

- An indictment was filed against a former minister accused of corruption by the Special Prosecution. Indictments for criminal offenses of abuse of official position or authority were also filed against two (2) former municipal directors.
- More than 10 senior public officials were arrested, and properties were seized following the "Brezovica" operation.
- More than sixteen (16) individuals were arrested, and dozens of indictments featuring organized crime, corruption, and money laundering charges were initiated.
- Disciplinary proceedings were initiated against more than eleven (11) officials, out of this number, six (6) judges and five (5) prosecutors. One (1) judge and one (1) prosecutor were suspended, one (1) judge had their salary reduced, one (1) prosecutor was publicly reprimanded, and one (1) judge was suspended by the Judicial Council with their salary was reduced by 50% for 10 months. Two (2) judges were subjected to disciplinary proceedings, and a criminal investigation was initiated against a prosecutor by the Basic Prosecution in Peja. A state prosecutor was punished with a public reprimand by the Prosecutorial Council following BIRN's complaints about failure to start working on time.
- Eighty (80) inspections of more than fifty (50) businesses were undertaken. As a result, more than 100 undeclared workers without employment contracts were found, and a fine of €200,000 was issued to businesses for avoiding millions of tax payments.
- Two (2) contests were canceled for official positions – the director of RTK and a dentist position in Podujeva.

BIRN Kosovo is proud to present a compilation of stories that had wide-reaching impacts over the previous year:

January

On [January 19](#), as a result of citizen reports submitted to KALLXO.com and BIRN's agreement to film the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) and document the field inspections of the Labour Inspectorate, more than 50 different businesses were inspected throughout Kosovo under the watchful eye of Kallxo cameras. These targeted investigations were chosen based on citizens' complaints to Kallxo alleging various infringements upon workers' rights and non-payment of pension funds. As a result, Kallxo found that more than 100 employees lacked employment contracts, a serious violation of Kosovo's Labour Law. They were given the chance to formalize their contracts, which assures that the workers get the benefits and job security guaranteed by the law. Several employers were also fined. All of these actions have been periodically filmed by Kallxo, broadcast in a series of TV reportages, and as a result, encouraged more reporting by the public¹.

On [January 27](#), KALLXO.com published an investigation on Judge Riza Livoreka, a member of the judiciary in the municipality of Kaçanik. The publication uncovered footage of the judge pressuring a defendant to settle their case outside of court, under the threat of property seizure. Since the offered agreement was refused by the defendant, on December 31, 2021, Judge Livoreka issued a decision to take the property from the Malsiu family and give it to the Tusha family. Less than 24 hours after the broadcast of the investigation in the "Kallxo Pernime" program, the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) suspended Judge Livoreka.

February

On [February 1](#), following an investigation by BIRN, the Basic Prosecution in Prizren initiated an indictment against Levent Kasami, a former director of public services in Prizren during Haskuka mayorship. Kasami's actions, as revealed in BIRN's 2021 report, involved manipulating a tender to benefit a specific economic operator, thereby causing financial harm to the budget of the Prizren municipality.

On [February 23](#), KALLXO.com published an internal audit report from the Ministry of Justice which identified that €92,000 intended for the Council for the Defence of Human Rights and Freedoms (CDHRF), to cover travel expenses associated with monitoring sessions at the Specialist Chambers in The Hague, was instead diverted to cover the staff salaries and office rent of this NGO. Prompted by BIRN's coverage of the matter, the Ministry of Justice severed the memorandum of understanding with CDHRF and demanded the return of the money.

March

On [March 14](#), following [an investigation by BIRN broadcasted in April 2021](#), four (4) former officials from the Urban Traffic public enterprise of Prishtina municipality, as well as a private company manager, were arrested for abusing their official positions or authority and conflict of interest for having damaged the public budget. Valon Fana, the journalist who worked on this story as part of KallxoPernime coverage, was also awarded for this story.

¹ <https://kallxo.com/lajm/per-pak-muaj-atk-zbuloi-qindra-punetore-pa-kontrata-pune/>

April

On [April 20](#), Florije Zatriqi, a judge, was demoted after a series of Kallxo articles. These reports exposed the lenient sentence of just 8 months that Zatriqi gave to a rapist who had kidnapped a minor for an entire night, raped her with three friends, and confessed his guilt. While BIRN called for the judge's suspension, the Kosovo Judicial Council chose to demote the judge, reassigning Zatriqi to a lower court.

May

On [May 12](#), following [an in-depth investigation by BIRN in 2020](#) which revealed how Dhurata Hoxha, the former Minister of European Integration, lobbied for border changes in Kosovo, the Special Prosecution of Kosovo filed an indictment against Hoxha for abusing her public post. The indictment was the result of an investigation into a lobbying contract signed in 2019 with a company from Paris, which ultimately promoted the idea that “territorial exchange” could be a solution in the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue.

June

On [June 14](#), a BIRN investigation revealed that the Trepça JSC public enterprise had not paid pension contributions to its employees for numerous years, resulting in a staggering total owed amount of €9 million euros.

October

On [October 28](#), the court sentenced four (4) criminals to ten years in jail. The criminals were first discovered by a [shocking investigation](#) by Kallxo in 2018. The investigation revealed that the criminals had planted bombs in order to intimidate a businessman and derail the privatization of land owned by AKP which had occurred in 2010. The ten year jail sentences were based on compelling evidence gathered by Kallxo, including testimony from several key witnesses.

November

On [November 9](#), Kallxo published a groundbreaking two-year investigation revealing that €150,000 had been used to influence a number of ongoing court cases in Kosovo's prosecutorial system. Kallxo's recordings show Haxhi Derguti, the head of Appellate Prosecution, in a series of meetings negotiating the fate of cases in exchange for money.

AWARDS GIVEN AND RECEIVED

Awards given

March

In [March 2022](#), BIRN Kosovo awarded 10 journalists with fellowships for writing fact-checking stories as part of the “Promoting Fact-Checking Journalism to Combat Fake News and Misinformation in Kosovo” project, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo. In partnership with FindBug, BIRN organised a training session with the selected fellows on how to use the fact-checking platform that was launched as part of the project.

May

In [May 2022](#), as part of the “Green Energy Days” series of activities that BIRN Kosovo and its partners organised within the “Europeanization of Kosovo’s Environmental Agenda” project, supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo, BIRN Kosovo produced one (1) documentary. Titled “Helm n’ujë, Helm n’ajër” (Poison in the Water, Poison in the Air), the documentary produced by Ikonë Studio and Pixels Production was awarded by BIRN. The documentary premiered as part of [Dokufest](#) in August 2022, and was followed by a discussion about environmental issues in Kosovo. This documentary reveals and raises awareness about some of the main environmental problems in Kosovo.

June

In [June 2022](#), BIRN Kosovo awarded five (5) journalists with fellowships to publish in-depth investigative articles based on judicial data as part of the “Data 4 Fighting Harmful Narratives on the Judiciary” project, funded by the Millennium Foundation Kosovo (MFK). As part of the same MFK-funded project, BIRN awarded the two law students with the best seminar papers with scholarships to write a seminar paper based on judicial data, in order to raise awareness of public judicial data and how to use it. In October 2022, BIRN Kosovo [awarded 10 journalists with fellowships](#) to conduct analysis and write investigative articles on various labour rights issues as part of the project “Protecting and promoting labour rights of vulnerable groups in the labour market” funded by the European Union Office in Kosovo.



Arbisa Shefkiu

Winner of Annual Awards in Child Protection 2021

[On January 22, 2022](#), the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection in Kosovo (KOMF) awarded BIRN Kosovo's journalist Arbisa Shefkiu the Annual Award for Child Protection 2021 for her investigative story titled "[Sexual harassment in a school in Malisheva](#)". The TV story focused on a specific case involving the alleged sexual harassment of a minor by her teacher. The 15-year-old student reported the case to the

school's management. The author, Arbisa Shefkiu, found that the Gjakova Prosecutor's Office closed the case through a mediation procedure between the victim's brother and the teacher.

"For me, it is very important that the story has been evaluated by the evaluation committee, in dealing with this topic I have feelings that are both depressing and encouraging because a 15-year-old raised her voice and was not afraid like in many other cases".



Valon Fana

Winner of Annual Awards in Child Protection 2021 and Winner of the first prize of Speak Up for Procurement Awards 2022 organized by FOL Movement

[On January 22, 2022](#) BIRN Kosovo journalist Valon Fana was awarded the Annual Award for Child Protection 2021 by the Coalition of NGOs for Child Protection in Kosovo (KOMF) for his investigation titled "Suspicion of Misuse of Kosovar Children's Data by 'World Vision' Organization". World Vision is suspected of having misused children's data during

a program to support children in the municipality of Lipjan. Fana interviewed several parents who suspected that their children's data had been misused because their pictures had been published alongside videos and texts of a religious nature. While some parents had given their consent for the data to be used, they had not authorized its use in a religious context. The police and Information and Privacy Agency were involved, and eventually, the municipality stopped cooperating with the organization.

"I am very happy that my article that talks about a well-founded suspicion of data misuse of about 3 thousand children of the municipality of Lipjan was appreciated. I thank the team of the legal office at Kallxo.com with whom we found the violations in this case".

[In April 2022](#), Valon Fana, a BIRN journalist, received first prize from the FOL Movement's SPEAK Up for Public Procurement journalism awards for his investigation titled "[The public urban transport company buys the private car of its chair of its board](#)". The investigation revealed that the car belonging to the former chair of Urban Traffic was purchased by the public enterprise through an open tender at a price two times higher than the market price. Furthermore, the investigation exposed how the purchase of the car violated public procurement laws and regulations, as the tender process was opened two months later than the purchase date.



Egzon Dahsyla

Winner of the third prize of Speak Up for Procurement Awards 2022 organized by FOL Movement

[In April 2022](#), Egzon Dahsyla, a BIRN journalist, received the third prize from the FOL Movement for his investigation titled “[€460,000 Was Not sufficient for the Municipality of Gjakova to Clean a Landfill Site](#)”. The investigation discovered that although over €460,000 was spent on cleaning, treating, and

Gjakova, the landfill still exists and promises were not fulfilled. The investigation also revealed that the company contracted to complete this service, Korben, was the only company in the competition, and offers were not requested from other companies.



Kreshnik Gashi, Visar Prebreza and Behar Mustafa

Winners of the EU Investigative Journalism Awards 2022

[On November 2022](#), Kreshnik Gashi, Behar Mustafa, and Visar Prebreza won first prize in the EU Investigative Journalism Awards 2022 for a series of four different televised investigations showing the long-term consequences of corruption and money

time a team of journalists was awarded for four different investigations. The key investigation, called “The North File”, found Hashim Thaci’s brother Idriz Thaci colluded with a Serbian businessman from the north of Kosovo (who made it onto the US blacklist) to invest in Ulcinj and launder money in the process. The probe followed the money trail with precision, exposing the intricate web of corruption and deceit.

The second investigation revealed a loan shark scheme that was only uncovered after a brave whistleblower approached Kallxo. The third investigation was a two-program series that showed Prizren prosecutor Ervehe Gashi’s husband taking a bribe to fix the case in favor of the one offering the bribe. These investigations were all broadcasted during 2021 as part of the KALLXO Përnime TV program and were awarded in 2022.



Adelina Ahmeti

Winner of the “Web Story 2022” prize

[On December 7, 2022](#), AJK awarded journalist Adelina Ahmeti won the “Web Story 2022” prize for her investigative series on “Suspicious that the Chief Prosecutor of Gjakova distributed test questions to professional associates.” On July 13, 2022, Ramiz Buzhala, the chief prosecutor of Gjakova, sent the questions for the written test for professional associates to journalist Adelina Ahmeti. At 11:25 on

July 13, the KALLXO.com team received a message containing the words “Indictment essay, State Prosecutor, Constitutional Court.” KALLXO.com later discovered that the message was about the written test for professional associates, which took place on July 13 at the former Rilindja facility where the Ministry of Justice is located. After KALLXO.com published a video allegedly showing Buzhala distributing the test questions to professional associates, the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC) decided to suspend Buzhala from his position. The KPC also announced that the vacancy announcement would be canceled, and the recruitment process would start from the beginning. On July 14, Ramiz Buzhala, the Chief Prosecutor of Gjakova, was suspended from work.

“The case of Buzhala shows that in many state institutions working place is gained with nepotism and many other people are not allowed to work with merit”, she said, adding that this award should be an awareness for the KPC.

MEDIA PRODUCTION

Throughout 2022, BIRN Kosovo’s editorial team investigated, wrote, published, and broadcasted stories on various topics. These included stories about the accountability and transparency of public institutions, malpractice in public procurement related to services and contracts awarded during the COVID-19 pandemic, monitoring the judicial system by exposing corruption cases, labor rights issues, environmental crimes, energy crises, organized crime in the north of Kosovo, good and bad management practices of public enterprises such as public TV, Kosovo Telecom, Kosovo Post Office, Kosovo Energy Company, and cases of violence against women, including rape, trafficking, and sexual harassment. Additionally, BIRN Kosovo covered the Kosovo education system and the conditions of schools throughout Kosovo.

In 2022, BIRN Kosovo received 1,950 citizens’ reports and published 23,620 articles on its online anti-corruption platform, KALLXO.com. Of these articles, 684 were in-depth analyses, 311 were fact-checking Krypometër articles, 758 were articles resulting from the monitoring of court hearings, and 21,867 were news pieces, including interviews, opinions, daily news bulletins, etc. Out of the 1,950 reports received, 1,657 were verified, and the team followed up on 465, including submitting letters, recommendations, requests for access to documents, and legal complaints sent to public institutions.

Moreover, BIRN Kosovo published 172 televised debates and reports in 2022 and 85 short videos as part of its KALLXO Përnime TV program on its KALLXO.com Facebook and YouTube channels. Throughout the year, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted at least four (4) televised productions per week through its media partner, RTV Dukagjini.

BIRN Kosovo’s KALLXO.com had great success in reaching audiences through TV and social media. In 2022, its video and televised productions received 3,255,182 views on YouTube, reached 5,343,495 on Facebook, and had 66,956,284 website visits.

KALLXO.com

KALLXO.com is BIRN Kosovo and I/KS's fastest-growing product. It is the first anti-corruption platform in Kosovo for reporting corruption, fraud, and other legal violations within both public and private institutions and companies. In a recent public opinion survey, KALLXO.com was listed as the second most credible source for fighting corruption for the fifth time in a row, behind only the Kosovo Police and far ahead of the State Prosecutor and Anti-Corruption Agency.

Initially, the platform exclusively investigated reports received from citizens, but it soon transformed into a trusted source for news. KALLXO.com is made possible by our team of journalists, editors, legal advisers, court monitors, and producers, who conduct fieldwork every day and offer objective, fact-checked information.

KALLXO.com is an all-inclusive platform, serving all ethnic communities in Kosovo, including Albanians, Serbs, Bosniaks, Turks, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians, among others. KALLXO.com also serves as an umbrella to all of our other media platforms, including the KALLXO Përnime TV program, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë (Life in Kosovo) online newspaper, Krypometër (Truth-o-meter) fact-checking platform, and the English language online newspaper, Prishtina Insight.

January

On January 28, 2022, KALLXO.com published an investigation that led to the Basic Prosecution in Peja initiating a criminal investigation against a prosecutor, Hashim Çollaku. This investigation was a follow-up after the suspension of Judge Livoreka.

February

On February 18, 2022, the Basic Prosecution in Gjakova filed an indictment for corruption against the Municipality of Rahovec's former director of health, Samir Mustafa based on a [BIRN investigation of 2019](#), which revealed illegal employment of a physio specialist.

March

On March 14, 2022, four former officials from the Urban Traffic public enterprise of Pristina municipality and the manager of a private company were arrested for abuse of official position or authority and conflict of interest following an investigation by BIRN that was broadcasted in April 2021. Valon Fana, the BIRN journalist who worked on this story and was part of the KALLXO Përnime broadcast, was also awarded for this investigation.

On March 18, 2022, following reporting by BIRN about Omer Shkrijel, a doctor from Lipjan who held four jobs at the same time and was thus missing from his office in his public workplace while profiting from his private clinic, he resigned from the Family Medicine Centre in Janjeva.

April

On April 19, 2022, after a reporting by KALLXO.com, the Municipality of Gjilan canceled the planned employment of dozens of "consultants". The municipality had planned to hire dozens of consultants in various fields, but some positions were declared in violation of procurement regulations for engaging experts through tenders.

May

On May 4, 2022, a few months after KALLXO.com revealed how a prosecutor, Stojanka Kasalović, had acquitted a suspect for murdering his wife in Llausha, the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC) imposed a disciplinary measure against the prosecutor. In this case, BIRN advocated for a suspension of the prosecutor, but the KPC issued a light punishment.

June

On June 13, 2022, after a citizen reported the incident to KALLXO.com, a €500 fine was issued to a worker who threw construction material from a building, endangering the safety of citizens near construction sites.

October

On October 17, 2022, after KALLXO.com published an article about a primary school in the municipality of Ferizaj that had suspended a 5-year-old because of his long hair, the Education Inspectorate recommended that the child be allowed to return to school. Additionally, Ferizaj's Municipal Directorate of Education announced that disciplinary procedures had been opened against Servete Hajrullahu, the school's principal. The school subsequently announced that it had changed its regulations. Within 24 hours of BIRN's article being published, the Education Inspectorate met with the Directorate of Education in Ferizaj to discuss the child's suspension. One day later, the child's parents were informed that their son could go back to the school, but they decided to send him to another school in Ferizaj.

On October 29, 2022, KALLXO.com research highlighted the need for journalists to be equipped with protective equipment, such as bulletproof vests, helmets, or gas masks. These findings also raised awareness among Members of Parliament who work on drafting laws, who stated that the providing protective equipment for journalists is necessary.

December

On December 12, 2022, following the investigation by KALLXO.com, the Basic Court in Gjakova initiated disciplinary proceedings against Judge Afijete Sada. The judge was subjected to disciplinary proceedings due to delays in the compilation of the decision on the security measure.

KALLXO Përnime

Since September 2020, the TV debates formerly known as “Jeta në Kosovë” (Life in Kosovo) and the TV reports formerly known as “Drejtësia në Kosovë” (Justice in Kosovo) have been merged into one program, KALLXO Përnime. KALLXO Përnime covers political, economic, and social affairs, as well as justice, police, and security issues in Kosovo. It provides live debates with state officials, scholars, academics, activists, artists, and students, among others. KALLXO Përnime TV reports regularly feature operations undertaken alongside the Kosovo Police and prosecutions. Alongside its hard-hitting debates and reports, KALLXO Përnime aims to tackle issues that are considered taboo in Kosovar society. The TV debates and reports produced in the scope of KALLXO Përnime are moderated by BIRN Kosovo’s executive director Jeta Xharra and BIRN Kosovo’s managing editor Kreshnik Gashi.

Contrary to previous years, in 2022 BIRN Kosovo broadcasted at least four televised productions per week through its media partner, RTV Dukagjini. Many televised productions were also broadcasted and published through its Serbian language partner, TV Mreža.

During 2022, BIRN Kosovo published a total of 172 televised debates and reports on KALLXO Përnime. Some of the most impactful KALLXO Përnime stories that sparked public debate are listed below:

January

On January 12, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program that discussed the decision taken on January 4, 2022, by the Minister of Economy, Artane Rizvanolli, to ban the production of cryptocurrencies in Kosovo. Luan Morina, head of the technical committee for emergency measures in the Ministry of Economy, explained the reasons for this decision in the “Kallxo Përnime” show. He stated that the primary reason was the need to save energy, which should be allocated to legal activities. This decision was made following the declaration of a state of emergency in the energy sector by the Government of Kosovo. The emergency declaration was approved by the Assembly of Kosovo two days before the new year in accordance with the procedure, as he further stated.

On January 19, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program featuring footage of a police and prosecutor’s office intervention in Prizren that took place the previous month. In the program, the prosecutor of the case, Petrit Kryeziu, reveals that the case was investigated for six months and that the victim was offered legal protection, cooperating with law enforcement and justice authorities throughout the investigation. Over the course of the investigation, the prosecutor implemented several measures to prove the criminal offense for which five people were suspected. The victim, a man with a good economic condition, was targeted by the five suspects in Prizren who had given him usurious loans and demanded interest and repayment of the debt.

On January 26, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV reportage showing footage of a Judge Riza Livoreka from municipality of Kacanik ordering the parties to reach an agreement outside court or he would rule for their property to be taken away. The Kosovo Judicial Council, KJC, suspended Kacanik Judge Riza Livoreka, only 24 hours after BIRN’s “Kallxo Përnime” TV program revealed the footage. The investigation was also published as an in-depth article on KALLXO.com and Prishtina Insight.

February

On February 14, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV reportage about one of the main security issues in the northern municipalities of Kosovo. The investigation reveals that since November 2021, the parallel authorities of Serbia have installed security cameras which film public spaces in Zvecan, Zubin Potok, and North Mitrovica. The Kosovo Police, which according to the law is responsible for controlling the area, admitted that they do not control the cameras that film the public areas including the citizens. Moreover, the TV reportage reveals all the locations where these cameras are installed including the location from which this equipment is being controlled. In addition, the mayors of northern municipalities spoke to BIRN staff exclusively about the overall situation and the management of these devices.

On February 23, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV program in regard to the loss in arbitration of the Kosovo Telecom against “Dardaphone” of Blerim Devolli. The guest speakers, including the former chairman of the Board of Telecom of Kosovo, Besa Shatri, former Chief Executive Officer of Telecom of Kosovo, Bedri Istrefi, and the technician director at Telecom, Halil Krasniqi, spoke more about the legal representation of Telecom of Kosovo, the loss of millions of euros, and the protection of this institution in such arbitrations.

On February 24, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program discussing the level of security in Kosovo after the Russian-Ukrainian conflict from different perspectives. The panelists in this debate brought attention to the risk of the spread of the Russian-Ukrainian conflict in the Western Balkans region, including Kosovo. Some of the key areas expected to be impacted by this conflict in Kosovo are the spread of media-translated texts from the Belgrade press, which are influenced by Russian propaganda in media outlets in Kosovo, the increase in the price of gas from Russia, which immediately leads to an increase in the price of energy and affects inflation in the global market. Another area expected to be affected is the rise of tensions and the violation of the implementation of the rule of law in the municipalities in the north of the country, inhabited by the Serbian majority population.

On February 28, 2022, BIRN broadcasted the TV debate as part of the “Kallxo Pernime” TV program related to unprotected categories, highlighting the handling of cases of assault on journalists and the LGBTI community. The guest speakers of the debate were: Blert Morina – CEL Kosova, Kreshnik Gashi – Editor in Chief of Kallxo.com, Dren Rogova – Vice President of the Basic Court in Prishtina and Labinot Leposhtica – BIRN’s Legal Advisor. BIRN also published an article about what was discussed during the debate.

March

On March 2, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV program in regards to Deme Elezaj, an airfield lighting engineer who was an employee at Prishtina Airport since 2002, who lost his job because he raised the issue of security on the airport runway. According to him, an issue at the runway of the airport jeopardizes the operations of aircraft and could lead to an accident.

On March 15, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV reportage in regards to the rising prices of essential food, items, services, and other products in Kosovo. Guest speakers of this program were: Lebibë Haliti -Deputy Chief Inspector of the Market Inspectorate, Sakip Imeri - Competition Authority, Muhamet Ferizi - Association of Mullis, Ruzhi Kurtishaj - Association of Urban Transport, and Berat Mustafa - factory “Floil”. Throughout the program, key dilemmas were what cost have been experienced by the markets due to increased prices of food items, oil resources of Kosovo, and whether the transport companies will implement the Government’s decision to reduce the price of bus tickets.

On March 28, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV debate as part of the “Kallxo Pernime” TV program related to the corruption and efficiency of the prosecution. Guest speakers included: Labinot Leposhtica – BIRN’s Legal Advisor, Valdet Gashi – Prosecutor, Burim Ademi – Judge, and Arber Jashari – Lawyer. Key topics throughout the debate were: the number of people that have been convicted for corruption; the number of corruption cases that have been resolved so far; why indictments are not passed in corruption cases, but in other cases they are; and the number of covert measures that have been initiated by the Prosecutor’s Office of Prishtina and Special Prosecutor’s Office. BIRN also published an article regarding the debate.

On March 31, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program, featuring the story of Bajram Zylfiu, one of the six people who survived the Krusha massacres. Zylfiu spoke about his experience and how he survived on March 24, 1999, the night after the launch of the NATO air campaign against the Serbian forces, when over 350 citizens of Krusha e Vogël and Krusha e Madhe were killed by the Serbian armed forces. Of the 241 people killed in Krushë e Madhe, 64 are still missing, while the other 113 killed were in Krushë e Vogël, 60 of which are still missing.

April

On April 14, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a TV reportage following a citizen report BIRN Kosovo received on its reporting platform “Violations of Labour Rights”, regarding a local company in the Gjakova region, several of whose employees were working without employment contracts and were not declared at the TAK. Upon receiving the citizen report, BIRN Kosovo’s researchers conducted preliminary verifications of the report and confirmed the allegations of the citizen reporter. BIRN Kosovo subsequently forwarded this information to the TAK and a joint inspection of the company was organised. BIRN Kosovo’s film crew joined a team of tax inspectors from the municipality of Prishtina to conduct a field visit at the company and verify whether or not the allegations made by the citizen reporter were true. After checking the company’s records and documentation, the tax inspectors found that several employees were indeed working without employment contracts and were not registered at the TAK.

On April 19, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a TV reportage regarding a local company in the Gjiilan region. According to the report, while this company had told its employees that they had employment contracts, these contracts were irregular given that these employees were not registered on TAK’s database. Upon receiving the citizen report, BIRN Kosovo’s researchers conducted preliminary verifications of the report and confirmed the allegations of the citizen reporter. BIRN Kosovo subsequently forwarded this information to the TAK and a joint inspection of the company was organised. BIRN Kosovo’s film crew joined a team of tax inspectors from the municipality of Prishtina to conduct a field visit at the company and verify whether or not the allegations of the report were true. After speaking to the owner of the company and requesting all necessary documentation, the tax inspectors initially found that two employees of said company were working without employment contracts. The tax inspectors involved in this joint inspection returned to the TAK office to verify whether or not the company had declared its employees in the TAK database. They found that in the last two years, 15 employees of this company were not declared to the TAK. For this violation, the company is expected to receive a fine from the Fines Office at the TAK.

On April 28, 2022, BIRN broadcasted the “Kallxo Pernime” TV program related to the lack of budget and staff support for KJC and KPC. The guest speakers of the debate were: Kreshnik Gashi – Editor in Chief of Kallxo.com, Shkelzen Maliqi - The General Director of the KJC Secretariat, Valdrin Krasniqi - acting General Director of the KPC Secretariat, Ruzhdi Osmani from the Ministry of Justice and Blerta Iberdemaj – KALLXO.com’s Legal Officer. This debate discussed the analysis published on KALLXO.com regarding the management of human resources in the Judicial Council and the Prosecutorial Council of Kosovo, as well as the ongoing lack of budget.

May

On May 2, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a TV program on workers' rights on BIRN's KALLXO Pernime TV Program. The TV program covered the topic of safety in the workplace and representatives from the Labour Inspectorate, the Tax Administration of Kosovo, and the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova discussed key issues relating to safety in the workplace. The main emphasis was given to dilemmas such as: how much is the Labor Law being respected? how much security is there in workplaces? how are workers' rights being protected? how long are court proceedings in cases of labor disputes?

On May 30, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV debate as part of the "Kallxo Pernime" TV program related to the corruption and efficiency of the prosecution in dealing with cases of sexual violence. Guest speakers included: Kreshnik Gashi – Managing Editor of Kallxo.com, Lumturije Buqeta - Prosecutor, Agim Maliqi – Judge, Femie Gashi Bytyqi – Lawyer and Kastriot Berisha - BIRN's Legal Officer. According to BIRN's analysis, less than 10 percent of those who are reported for rape and sexual crimes go to prison. Then throughout the debate the speakers discussed topics such as: why are there delays in handling these cases by the courts? why are we in a situation where the state releases hundreds of people with charges of this type? what are the reasons we have reached a situation where sexual crimes go unpunished?

On May 31, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a TV reportage following a citizen report regarding a local business in Prishtina, one of whose employees is currently working without an employment contract. Upon receiving the citizen report, BIRN Kosovo's researchers conducted preliminary verifications of the report and confirmed the allegations of the citizen reporter. BIRN Kosovo subsequently forwarded this information to the TAK and a joint inspection of the company was organised. BIRN Kosovo's film crew joined a team of tax inspectors from the municipality of Prishtina to conduct a field visit at the company and verify whether or not the allegations made by the citizen reporter were true. After checking the company's records and documentation, the tax inspectors found that an employee of said business was indeed working without employment contract and was not registered at the TAK.

June

On June 6, 2022, BIRN broadcasted an episode of the "Kallxo Pernime" TV program related to delays in resolving of civil cases in the courts. The guest speakers of the debate were: Kreshnik Gashi – Editor in Chief of Kallxo.com, Valon Totaj - Head of the Court of Appeal, Suzana Gashi from the Ombudsperson's Office in Kosovo, Arbër Jashari – Lawyer, and Vyrtyste Gërvalla from KALLXO.com. As part of this debate, 'Court dragging', certain questions arouse; why do people have to wait for years for controversial issues to be resolved? why do we experience imbalances between the courts? are judges afraid of alimony cases?

On June 9, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program that followed up on Pristina Pride with a panel discussion composed of family members, victims, and activists defending the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities. The panelists shared their stories from different angles of defending the rights of LGBTIQ+ communities. Shemsije Musa-Çerkini shared how she realized that her son is gay. Activist Čerkica Rexhepi said that when she was 13 years old, her family kicked her out of the house, and at the age of 23, she went to the city of Peja as a bride. Activist Arbër Nuhiu said that some people wore masks in the Pristina Pride parade due to social pressure. Kreshnik Gashi from KALLXO.com explained how there is a tolerance of violence and abuse of members of the LGBTIQ+ community within the system.

On June 14, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a TV reportage about the Trepca mine and the huge sums of money this enterprise owes to its miners. Among the topics covered in the reportage are the reasons behind Trepca's decision not to provide pension funds to its miners since 2019, the lack of compensation given to miners for the injuries they endured in the workplace, and what happens to the 1% of miners' wages that are deducted by the Trepca mine supposedly for the purpose of transferring them to the Trepca union fund. People interviewed in this TV reportage include several representatives from the Trepca mineworkers' union, two miners, the director of Finance at Trepca and the head of the Board at Trepca, among others.

July

On July 5, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV investigation, which is known as the largest anti-drug investigation in the country. The investigation was initiated by the Kosovo Police and the Prosecutor's Office of Ferizaj, and as a result, more than 15 people, including 6 Turkish citizens, were arrested in one of the largest anti-drug operations in Ferizaj. The group, who had been under surveillance for a long time, was caught trafficking 67 kg of "captagon," a dangerous type of heroin drug. Portrayed as the largest drug group in that area, the group had managed to build a processing laboratory in the village of Firaje in the municipality of Shtërpce and then packed the drugs in a house in the village of Varosh in Ferizaj.

On July 5, 2022, BIRN broadcasted another episode as part of the "Kallxo Përnime" TV program related to the overturning of court decisions. Guest speakers included: Kreshnik Gashi – Editor in Chief of Kallxo.com, Merita Stublla-Emini – Lawyer, Urim Vokshi – Lawyer, Afrim Shala - Judge at the Court of the Appeals, and Kastriot Berisha - BIRN's Legal Officer. Throughout the debate, legal violations by judges were discussed such as; how much are legal violations by judges costing the justice system? what is the percentage of cases that are returning to reset? is there accountability in the justice system for the hundreds of hours lost and judgments declared invalid? have any judges been dismissed as a result of poor performance or disciplinary violations? - In how many cases were those accused of corruption released in violation of the law?

September

On September 7, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV debate concerning the state's approach to rape cases, particularly the case where an 11-year-old girl was raped by five men. The panel in the studio consisted of Saranda Keçekolla - Lawyer; Halit Shaljami – Lawyer; Bekim Dugolli - Defender of the victims, and Kreshnik Gashi, editor of KALLXO.com. The debate started with the screening of the cases of attempted rape inside the school building, and the court's decision of only one month detention, which Keçekolla considered low. Hence, in cases where there are crimes against minors, but even if the victim is an adult, they should be considered as an aggravating circumstance. For the case of the 11-year-old girl, the first time in June when it was classified as trafficking, I was invited by the Kosovo Police where I had a short conversation with the victim, then the Police took their actions. The girl's condition was not good, and her case was sensitive, as declared by the Defender of the victims. In the first case that the Police described as trafficking, they identified several places and objects. Lawyer Halit Shaljami, who had previously worked as a police officer, related to the case of suspected trafficking and rape of an 11-year-old girl, said that even the parents were not taken care of. He added that if there was evidence that could be identified, the responsibility falls on the institutions.

October

On October 18, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV investigation on the mismanagement that happened at the University Clinic of Kosovo, revealing how a patient's surgery at UCUK was mishandled. Drin Haxhijakupi, a young man from Prishtina, was admitted to the Clinic of Otorhinolaryngology (ENT) at UCUK on September 26. The next day, on September 27, patient Haxhijakupi had an appointment for thyroid gland surgery. When he was getting ready to enter the room, he was dressed in the clothes that patients wear before surgery, and he was even given the "Fraxiparin" injection. However, when he arrived at the hall, he was informed that the doctor, Zgjim Limani, who was scheduled to operate on him, was not at work. The data show that Dr. Zgjim Limani had asked for a day off the day before the patient's operation took place.

On October 24 and October 25, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a two-part KALLXO.com TV program, which revealed the results of a groundbreaking two-year investigation. €150,000 had been given to influence several ongoing court cases in Kosovo's prosecutorial system. KALLXO.com's filmed recordings show Haxhi Derguti, the head of Appellate Prosecution, in a series of meetings negotiating the fate of cases in exchange for money.

On October 26 and October 27, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV reportage showing exclusive footage of extensive tax operations against singers and disco halls throughout Kosovo. Many singers, djs, wedding halls and discos have been the target of tax audits in which over 100 TAK officials were involved. The aim of the operation was to verify and evaluate tax declarations of singers and businesses, including here the undeclared employees.

November

On November 7, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted a KALLXO Përnime TV program that featured a debate about the Boycott of Institutions in the North of the country. The guests invited to the debate were Aleksandar Arsenijević, founder of the civic initiative "Serbian Survival", Murat Mehmeti from the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK), Valdet Hoxha, former head of the Kosovo Police Inspectorate (KPI), and Kreshnik Gashi, editor of KALLXO.com. The debate about the situation in the North of the country was followed by exclusive stories about developments in the North. During the debate, there were arguments about the intervention of a special unit for medical drugs, which started with regular units of police, specifically the northern policemen. The special unit carried out the intervention. The policemen who were seen stripping the front of drugstores were not Albanian policemen, but Serbian policemen who were members of the Kosovo Police Special unit composed of police officers of Serbian ethnic background. Gashi, the editor of KALLXO.com, responded to Arsenijevi's argument about the unlawful intervention of the Special Unit of Police on this occasion by saying, "The prosecutor was a Serb who ordered the raid, the judge was a Serb who ordered the raid," emphasizing that the prosecutor and the judge who ordered the raid were Serbs.

On November 15, 2022, BIRN broadcasted a TV debate on the work of the Inspectorate, how to report violations, and the mandate of the Inspectorate in regulating employment issues, more specially the death of workers at the workplace. Guest speakers included: Nijazi Asllani – Deputy General Director of TAK, Lumni Sallauka – Judge at the Court of Appeal, Taulant Hajdari – Lawyer, and Kastriot Berisha – Legal officer at BIRN. Throughout the "Death of workers" debate key topics were: how many workplace deaths have occurred in recent years? how many of the workers who died in the workplace did not have a contract? why are there few prison sentences for business owners found guilty in these cases? how many businessmen are in prison because they did not respect the rights of workers and as a result some worker died? is there coordination between the Labor Inspectorate and TAK in these cases? The TV debate was broadcasted as part of the KALLXO Përnime TV Program on RTV Dukagjini.

On December 11, 2022, BIRN Kosovo broadcasted two TV reportages on its “KALLXO Pernime” TV program, following the history of reform and inspections for work injuries. The first part of this reportage is dedicated to 50 women, a number that urged the initiative to frame reforms to prevent gender-based violence. Through this TV reportage, BIRN demonstrates the tragedies of murdered women and public social pressure in Kosovo as a generator for reforms in the justice system. Moreover, BIRN highlights the state’s role to protect women’s lives. In the second part of the reportage, Kallxo.com reveals the scene footage of the inspection of the construction facility where a worker was suspected to have suffered injuries. In continuity, Kallxo.com and its inspection team discover other issues at the same facility. The most prominent was the number of workers without job contracts and the reason behind the interruption of construction of this inspected company.

Krypometër (Truth-o-meter)

Krypometër was launched in 2016 as the first fact-checking tool in Kosovo to assess the truthfulness of statements made by public figures. The site fact-checks recent declarations by political party members and public officials, comparing their statements and promises with actual legislation or policies they have implemented. This is done through a system that not only labels statements as pass or fail but also evaluates statements as to whether they are true, partially true, a lie, or even a change of position, followed by an explanation for each rating. The tool utilizes the power of the internet to promote improved standards of democratic political culture by enabling ordinary citizens to learn more about the performance of their politicians and elected officials. On January 14, 2019, the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN) granted Krypometër an extended license to operate after a careful assessment of its work.

In 2022, a total of 396 Krypometër articles were published with illustrations and infographics. Some of the main articles are listed below:

January

January 13, 2022 The false news about the withdrawal of American soldiers from the “Bondsteel” camp

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a report from the media outlet “Albanian Post”, which claiming that American troops were withdrawing from “Bondsteel”. Officials within the U.S. Embassy contacted by KALLXO.com denied the news, stating that it was “complete fiction” and “appears to be Russian disinformation”. Armend Mehaj, the Kosovo Minister of Defence, and officials for information from KFOR also denied this news, stating that “American forces will not withdraw from the ‘Bondsteel’ camp or Kosovo”.

January 26, 2022 The Ministry of Defence denies the news about the purchase of “40 surveillance aircrafts”

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a report from local media outlets about the Ministry of Defence purchasing 40 surveillance aircraft for the Kosovo Security Force (KSF). The same news about the purchase of 40 surveillance aircraft was published by the portals klan kosova. tv, koha.net, and demokracia.com. Sefer Isufi, the head of strategic communication at the Ministry of Defence contacted by KALLXO.com, denied this news and considered it false.

February

February 8, 2022, The failure of Haradinaj for the level of electricity price increase

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a statement made by Ramush Haradinaj, the President of Alliance for the Future of Kosovo political party, on 02.08.2022. Haradinaj claimed that “An ordinary citizen who has used at least 850kWh, with 60% in the high tariff and 40% in the low tariff, has paid 49.68 euros. But now, with the Kurti Government in charge of the country, will pay 92.40 euros.” However, KALLXO.com found that Haradinaj’s statement was inaccurate, as the decision made by the Energy Regulatory Office indicated that a citizen who has consumed 850 kilowatts, with 60% (or 510 kilowatts) in the high tariff and 40% (or 340 kilowatts) in the low tariff, will pay 52.15 euros, not 92.40 euros as Haradinaj claimed.

February 15, 2022, The lie of Kurt’s assistant that the media did not ask for confirmation of the salary lists from the MIA

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a false statement made by the Prime Minister’s assistant, Arianit Beqiri, who claimed that “No media outlet has requested confirmation of salary lists from the Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA).” However, KALLXO.com had requested clarifications on February 11th regarding the draft Law on Salaries from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but they did not receive a response. Moreover, the draft of this law lacked information about the coefficient amount.

February 21, 2022 The media fake reporting that the policeman allegedly committed suicide in Zllatar

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a local media outlet’s report about a policeman who allegedly committed suicide accidentally in a village in Pristina. KALLXO.com found that the Police Inspectorate of Kosovo arrested a policeman who allegedly shot his colleague at a party attended by 16 policemen. Additionally, five other police officers were arrested for allegedly causing public danger.

March

March 3, 2022, Fake news about the two conditions that Kosovo must meet for membership in NATO

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a local media outlet’s report about two conditions that Kosovo must meet for NATO membership, which KALLXO.com found to be false. Neither NATO nor its member countries have imposed only two conditions on Kosovo for NATO membership.

April

April 12, 2022, The fake news about the disappearance of the KSF Commander, Lieutenant General, Bashkim Jashari

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on a local media outlet's report about the disappearance of the commander of the KSF, Bashkim Jashari. The news, published on April 4th, was false. On April 5th, Lieutenant General Bashkim Jashari participated in the 23rd anniversary of the massacre in the village of Rezalle in the municipality of Skenderaj and welcomed the Director of NALT, Brigadier General Jörg Rüter, and his successor, Brigadier General Joachim Hoppe.

August

August 6, 2022, Violation of the deadlines of the roadmap for the implementation of the energy agreement

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article on the violation of deadlines in the roadmap for the implementation of the energy agreement. The calendar for the roadmap for the implementation of the energy agreement is 100 days, but after 41 days, only one point out of nine has been fully implemented. KALLXO.com found this deadline to be inaccurate since the only fully implemented point after 41 days was the first point of this roadmap, which was signed in Brussels on June 21st, which is the Energy Regulatory Office issuing the supply license to "Elektrosever". There are 49 days left until the end of the calendar.

September

September 3, 2022 License plates, the next 'node' of the dialogue - what does the agreement of 2011 envisage?

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article about a Kosovo Government's decision to give Serbian citizens a 2-month period, from September 1st to October 31st, to convert their vehicles from KM, PZ, PR, GL, etc. license plates to RKS. Since 2011, Kosovo and Serbia have been trying to find solutions for freedom of movement between the two countries, but the agreements reached have been delayed or not fully implemented. Even after 11 years since the first agreement on freedom of movement was reached, Kosovo and Serbia are still in dialogue to find a solution to the license plate issue. While Kosovo and Serbia have reached an agreement on the documents for entry and exit, they have not yet reached an agreement on the issue of license plates.

November 24, 2022 “For the sake of friends” - Deadlines and setbacks for the issue of license plates

KALLXO.com published a fact-checking article about the decision of reciprocity on license plates. KALLXO.com found that this decision of the Kosovo Government had changed. Since the decision was issued on June 29, 2022, it stated that from August 1st, owners of vehicles with illegal license plates should convert them to RKS. However, following a request from the U.S. ambassador in Kosovo, the implementation of the decision was postponed for one month until the end of October. As October drew to a close, the US requested another 10-month postponement of the decision. Kurti then changed the decision, requiring the registration of vehicles with illegal license plates in three stages. The implementation of the decision began on November 1, 2022, and as November 21 approached, the second phase emerged, imposing fines on owners of vehicles with illegal number plates from November 22. An attempt to find a solution was made in Brussels, during the high-level meeting between Kurti and Vučić on November 21. However, the meeting ended without an agreement. On the night of November 22, the same date set for the beginning of the imposition of fines, the U.S. ambassador asked the Government of Kosovo to postpone the imposition of fines for 48 hours, which was accepted. Within these 48 hours, Kosovo and Serbia reached an agreement in Brussels on the license plate issue.

Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë

Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë is the online Albanian-language newspaper of BIRN Kosovo, established in 2011. It aims to provide objective information of high journalistic standards and has been awarded for its commitment to revealing irregularities and the misuse of public funds in Kosovo.

In 2022, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë published 350 articles, including in-depth analyses and investigations, about various topics such as public spending, labor rights, the justice system’s handling of corruption cases, domestic violence, the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, environmental issues, arts, and culture.

Below are some of the key articles published on Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë in 2022:

The efficiency of the justice system in the handling of cases of attacks on journalists and the LGBTIQ+ community

On February 24, 2022, BIRN published an in-depth article about the efficiency of the Kosovo justice system in handling cases of attacks on journalists and the LGBTIQ+ community. The analysis identifies who has filed most cases related to attacks on these groups, thereby identifying an increase or decrease in cases of attacks. The quality of the actions taken by prosecutors was measured, starting from the handling of criminal reports, to requests for detention on remand and dismissal of reports, reflecting the efficiency of the justice system by indicating whether there have been statute-barred cases. The handling of these cases by Kosovo courts was determined by analyzing the manner of case resolution, showcasing the number of cases that have been tried with convictions, acquitted cases, and those in which the offense is statute-barred. The statistical data of the Kosovo Judicial Council – KJC show that the courts have resolved only 3 cases, out of the 18 cases which are open for criminal offenses of attacks and threats against journalists. A similar situation is also with the cases of attacks on members of the LGBTI community which have not yet been discovered. Out of 11 cases opened within 4 years, only 7 cases were solved by the Prosecution, while data shows that only one case has been finally put to trial. The article was also shared on the Facebook page of KALLXO.com.

“Efficiency of the Special Prosecution and the Special Department of the Court.”

On March 28, 2022 BIRN published the analysis which addresses the efficiency of the Special Department of the Basic Court of Prishtina in reviewing cases and actions taken, the quality of requests for detention on remand, and the quality of indictments by way of resolution in court in relation to other Prosecution Offices in the country. The effectiveness of legal remedies submitted by the prosecutors of the Special Prosecution in relation to other prosecutors was also analysed. Special attention was paid to the handling of corruption cases by the Special Prosecution of Kosovo and the efficiency of this institutions' handling of corruption cases, compared to other prosecution bodies. The analysis identified the number of cases in which prosecutors have initiated ex-officio cases, the institution that has deposited the most cases, the number of cases for which prosecutors have requested additional information as well as the number of cases for which prosecutors have appealed to the Court of Appeals regarding the rejected requests. The in-depth analysis found that there is a lack of use of measures during the development of investigative procedures regarding the corruption cases, lack of cooperation of institutions that have access to financial data, such as the Tax Administration of Kosovo – TAK and the Financial Intelligence with the prosecution in order to achieve qualitative financial investigations, and increase the confiscation of property acquired through criminal offenses. Moreover, it was found that there is a low quality of complaints in corruption cases by the Special Prosecution against court decisions and there is also a lack of efficiency in dealing with corruption offenses. The article was also shared on the Facebook page of KALLXO.com.

March

The millions of ecological tax for cars are not invested on the environment

On March 29, 2022, Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë published an article about the collection of the ecological tax in accordance with the Law on Road and Ecological Tax for Vehicles in Kosovo. According to research based on data released by the Statistics Agency of Kosovo, Kosovo collected 4.5 million euros from the ecological tax for the registration of all types of vehicles in 2021. However, it is unclear what this amount is intended for, despite Kosovo facing numerous environmental problems.

April

Risk of explosion from methane gas in Mirash

On April 13, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article about the risk of an explosion caused by methane gas in the Mirashi Sanitary Landfill. Despite promises made in June 2021 by the Minister of Environment, Spatial Planning, and Infrastructure, Liburn Aliu, to close the landfill due to its mismanagement over the last fifteen years, it is still in operation. The Mirashi Sanitary Landfill covers an area of 50 hectares and is used by seven (7) public companies and 36 private companies to deposit waste. The amount of garbage in this location has been increasing year after year, with 167,371 tons of garbage being collected in 2021.

Human resource management in justice institutions

On April 26, 2022 BIRN published an in-depth analysis which identified the departments and sectors of the Courts and Prosecution that need to change in order to improve the efficiency of justice institutions. Data analysis on the workload of judges and the efficiency of the courts reflected the need for changes in judicial staff structures, highlighting the need to adapt the number of judges and prosecutors according to the needs of the general public. The analysis identified the fact that KJC and KPC have never had their budget requirements fully met. Data from the Kosovo judicial system showed that the number of judges and supporting staff in the courts has been increasing year by year, while the request of the Judicial Council regarding budget requests has never been fully met. This has made it impossible to meet the needs of human resources. Out of the total number of judges, which is currently 396, only 53 judges were hired in 2021. Moreover, there was an increase in the number of support staff. In 2015 there were 1,441 members of support staff, but in 2021 there are 1,515. Although the Law on the State Prosecutor clearly states that in order to perform their responsibilities, prosecutors must have at least one professional associate, in practice this does not correspond. Currently there are 91 professional associates who serve 176 prosecutors. This article was also shared on the Facebook page of KALLXO.com.

The former facility of the pharmacy in Mitrovica square alienated for 503 euros per square meter

On April 29, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article on the alienation of a public pharmacy facility in Mitrovica. The leadership of the Municipality of Mitrovica allowed state properties, including the city’s pharmacy facility, to be sold at significantly lower prices than their market value under the pretext of opening the “Ali Zeneli” road. This occurred in both 2020 and 2021. The article questioned the amount that a square meter in Mitrovica square is typically sold for.

May

Efficiency of the justice system in combating sexual offenses, with special emphasis on sexual harassment as a new criminal offense

On May 20, 2022 BIRN published the second in-depth article comprised of data related to sexual offenses in both the general and the serious crimes departments. The analysis addresses the effectiveness of the legal remedies filed by Prosecutors against court decisions regarding sexual crime cases. The analysis identified that over 500 indictments for rape and sexual abuse were submitted by the prosecution in Kosovo within the last five years. According to the findings, a total of 197 cases of sexual offences were outdated between 2016 and 2019. The data show that the Basic Court in Prishtina has the most outdated cases. The analysis shows that sex crime cases in the Basic Court of Pristina have been more statute-barred than resolved over the years. During the years 2016–2019, the Basic Courts in Peja, Mitrovica, Gjakova, and Ferizaj did not impose any prison sentences, despite the fact that 41 cases of sexual offences were outdated. The article was also shared on the Facebook page of KALLXO.com.

Delayed justice in dealing with civil cases

On May 23, 2022, BIRN published an article based on data from the open database created by BIRN, which revealed how Kosovo's courts are failing to resolve more than half of the contentious cases assigned to them. According to the data, 108,164 such cases were heard in Kosovo's courts in 2021, with only 23,077 being resolved. The data shows that most of these cases are related to property. The data on these cases is alarming for the Kosovo justice system, since it shows that over the last three years, all of the Kosovo courts have left 34,885 cases unresolved out of a total of 46,620. Statistics show that 75% of the accepted cases have not been resolved. Citizens are entitled to a fair trial within a reasonable time frame, but the courts are failing to fulfill this obligation. The statistics show that this right of the parties is being violated by the courts of Kosovo.

June

The past haunts returnees from conflict zones

On June 20, 2022, "Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë" published research on the challenges of reintegrating repatriates from conflict zones. Prejudices against their past often hinder their attempts to reintegrate into social and economic life. The research highlights the lack of stable institutional mechanisms that offer long-term economic and reintegration stability as a major challenge in the reintegration of repatriates. Additionally, the high percentage of unemployment in the country makes employment for repatriates difficult, further complicating their reintegration efforts.

July

Costly mistakes made by judges who do not understand the law

On July 4, 2022, BIRN published the second in-depth article showing that 9% of court cases are re-tried due to mistakes made by judges in following legal procedures. According to data collected from 2015 to 2019, 33% of the cases are overturned or changed. Data analysis shows that most of the cases overturned by the Court of Appeal and returned for retrial are related to the violation of the Code of Criminal Procedure or the Criminal Code. Retrials from the beginning usually take several years to complete, which present the possibility that citizens are deprived of one of the most basic human rights recognized by the country's Constitution and international conventions - the right to a trial within a time limit and reasonable time. According to the database, judges violated the Code of Criminal Procedure in 1,013 cases between 2015 and 2019, while the Criminal Code of the Republic of Kosovo was violated in 233 cases. The article was also shared on the Facebook page of KALLXO.com.

September

The government appointed the member of Vetëvendosje to the board of the Regional Water Company Gjakova

On September 14, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article regarding the decision of Kosovo’s government to overlook eight candidates who had scored the highest points and instead appoint Jeton Haxijaha to the board of the Regional Water Company “Gjakova.” Haxijaha, a member of the Vetëvendosje Movement, was ranked 12th in the list of 15 recommended candidates. Although the Law on Public Enterprises states that the list of candidates must contain at least five more names than the positions for elected directors of the board, the government received a list of only 15 appointable candidates.

LDK assemblyman illegally elected as a chief executive of “Termokos”

On September 19, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article regarding the illegal election of Fisnik Osman, the chief executive of the public enterprise “Termokos,” in violation of the Law on Public Enterprises. He ran for the position of chief executive in the local public enterprise of the Municipality of Pristina, Termokos, while also serving as an assemblyman from the ranks of the LDK in the same municipality.

October

The former AAK candidate for MP wins the tender from the Municipality of Gjakova

On October 09, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article discussing how the Municipality of Gjakova, led by Ardian Gjini, the vice-president of the Alliance for the Future of Kosovo (AAK), awarded a tender to Fatos Axhemi, a former AAK candidate for MP in the 2019 Kosovo parliamentary elections. The winner of the consulting services tender for businesses in the municipality claimed that the basis for selection was professional qualification and not political proximity to AAK. In this case, the “price quotation” procedure was applied by the contracting authority.

December

Strong suspicions that the 155,000 euro tender was won through falsified documentation

On December 06, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published an article regarding suspicions that the company “ARF Sh.P.K” managed to secure a contract worth 155 thousand euros for the “supply of official material” with the Municipality of Gjilan using a forged document. It was revealed that the fulfillment of the criterion “The economic operator must provide evidence that they have successfully completed contracts of a similar nature in the past three years from the date of publication of the announcement, realized at a minimum value of 180,000.00 euros” was made possible by a reference from the Ministry of Protection, in which changes were made.

The workers who are dying are working without health checks

On December 18, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published research on the working conditions of construction workers who risk their lives while facing job insecurity and violations of their rights. Despite health checks costing as little as 15 euros, employers often ignore them, leading to a yearly increase in the number of work-related deaths and injuries. The Labor Inspectorate of Kosovo, responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Law on Safety and Health at Work and the worker-employer relationship, operates with less than 40 inspectors throughout Kosovo, making it challenging to fulfill their mandate.

The silent stories of women dismissal in Kosovo

On December 24, 2022, “Gazeta Jeta në Kosovë” published research on the untold stories of women’s dismissal in Kosovo. The research analyzed the employment status of pregnant and maternity women in the private and public sectors in Kosovo. Many face direct and indirect pressure leading to their dismissal from work after the end of their maternity leave.

Prishtina Insight (PI)

PI was established in 2008 and is BIRN Kosovo’s online English language newspaper. Its aim is to inform the wider public about ongoing developments in Kosovo politics, economics, and cultural and social life.

In 2022, PI provided extensive coverage of political affairs, socio-economic developments, environmental and energy issues in Kosovo. It also covered numerous topics in the fields of education, culture, and institutional reform.

The top 10 most read stories on PI in 2022 were as follows:

December

[Movie About Italy’s Ancient Albanian Community Reaches Netflix](#)

On December 23, 2021, PI published a story about the first-ever Albanian-themed film to be shown on Netflix, Arbëria, which attracted a lot of viewers. Arbëria focuses on the traditions and culture of the Arbëresh, a community of Albanian descent who have lived for centuries in some villages in Calabria and Basilicata in Italy. Emirjeta Vllahiu’s article brought the story of director Francesca Olivieri to Prishtina Insight.

February

[In a Fast-Changing Kosovo, Slow Food Keeps its Place](#)

On February 7, 2022, PI published an article about traditional Albanian delicacies that take hours to prepare. Even in today’s more hectic society, Kosovars are reluctant to let go of them. Pritë Bytyçi’s story on slow food in Kosovo shows that, despite the constant threat of disappearing in modern times, Albanian slow food is finding ways to survive by adapting and finding other forms of economic sustainability.

April

[In Land With No Sea, Kosovar Builds Ocean-Going Boats](#)

On April 30, 2022, PI published a story about a young Kosovar construction professional who constructs ocean-crossing fishing boats that sail as far away as the U.S. Antigonë Isufi's story shows how Kosovo's lack of access to salt water has not thwarted Shkamb Koshi's maritime ambitions. This young man from Gjakova has turned his passion for fishing into a profession by building ocean-going boats.

June

[Kosovo Theatre Director Takes on Controversy over Handke Nobel Prize](#)

On June 9, 2022, PI published an article about the theater play Handke Project, which premiered in the Kosovo capital, Prishtina, on June 3. The play repackaged the furor over Austrian writer Peter Handke's 2019 Nobel Prize for Literature for the theater. It was not about Handke's work on stage, but rather the words and actions of a man who delivered a eulogy at the funeral of Serbian strongman Slobodan Milosevic in 2006 and cast doubt on the massacres of Muslim Bosniaks during the 1992-95 Bosnian war. The story was brought to Prishtina Insight by Përparim Isufi.

September

[How One Gesture Curbed Ethnic Discrimination](#)

On September 29, 2022, PI published an opinion piece by Swiss researchers Didier Ruedin and Daniel Auer. This piece showed how social science research can shed light on topics of general interest. They asked whether galvanizing moments can influence discrimination against minorities. They found that a single gesture by Swiss football players with Kosovo-Albanian heritage was powerful enough to alter discrimination in Switzerland.

[PriFilm Fest's Controversial Prizes Spark Gender Debate](#)

On September 30, 2022, PI published an article by Blerta Begisholli and Antigonë Isufi discussing the thought-provoking award of both best actor and best actress being given to the same person at PriFest. Rina Krasniqi's double award sparked a debate about sexual and gender deconstruction in Kosovar society and caused controversy among critics.

October

[Kosovo's Metamorphosis Reflected in the Eyes of an American Researcher](#)

On October 5, 2022, PI published an essay about the life and experiences of Californian anthropologist Janet Reineck in the remote villages of Kosovo. This essay sparked special interest among our readers. Researcher Reineck has written a memoir of her life in Kosovo in the 1980s and 1990s, a world that she says has vanished with such bewildering speed that it poses important questions about the future of Kosovo's identity.

[Manifesta: Turning Rubble Into Art](#)

On October 27, 2022, PI published an article by Jeta Xharra about her first encounter with the nomadic biennale that has changed many people's perception of their capital city, Prishtina. In July of this year, Manifesta chose Prishtina as its home for the upcoming 100 days, bringing new energy and dynamics to the young city. Many of Manifesta's renovations, such as the Bricks Factory and the Hivzi Sylejmani library, will become part of Prishtina's cultural heritage, lasting long after Manifesta is gone.

December

[Love divided: Kosovar-Serbian Couple Struggle to Build a Home in Disapproving Society](#)

On December 6, 2022, PI published an article about a love story between two young people from Kosovo and Serbia. Despite the recent tensions between the two countries, this story could not be missed. The legacy of the Kosovo war and continued tensions have not stopped these two young people from building a life together in Prishtina. Despite being born during the Kosovo war and growing up with bad relations between their countries, their love for each other has prevailed.

[Hazir Reka Recalls Iconic Photo of Resistance](#)

On December 7, 2022, PI published an article about a sculpture placed on Zahir Pajaziti Square in Prishtina, which evoked memories of resistance. The author, Hazir Reka, described the historic moment of protester Faik Rexhepi, captured in a photograph, and our journalist Antigone Isufi brought it as a story.

Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice

BIRN Kosovo is part of the regional team that produces Balkan Insight, the leading online source of news and in-depth analysis with regional and local contexts, as well as Balkan Transitional Justice, which focuses on war crimes trials.

Balkan Insight offers daily news, analytical insights, and investigations on key issues in ten countries, including Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, and Serbia, with occasional coverage of Greece and Turkey. Starting from 2019, Balkan Insight has extended its coverage to Ukraine, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungary, and Poland. Correspondents address issues such as transitional justice, media freedoms, foreign influence, radicalization, corruption, and the rule of law, as well as political crises in the region and beyond. Balkan Insight annually publishes articles from over 200 local journalists, mostly relying on their wide network of alumni who have participated in award-winning programs such as the Balkan Fellowship for Journalistic Excellence, the Balkan Transitional Justice Initiative, and the BIRN Summer School of Investigative Journalism.

The Balkan Transitional Justice program is a regional platform that aims to improve the general public's understanding of transitional justice issues in former Yugoslav countries. The program is supported by the European Commission, the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs of Switzerland, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Robert Bosch Stiftung. The Balkan Transitional Justice program consists of online news reports published on the Balkan Transitional Justice website, covering local issues related to war crimes. Reports are available in four languages: English, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian/Montenegrin, Albanian, and Macedonian.

KALLXO.com's team of journalists has written and published articles on Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice, covering political, socio-economic, and cultural topics at the local and regional level.

Below is a selection of articles written by KALLXO.com journalists and published on Balkan Insight and Balkan Transitional Justice during 2022:

February

Concern over uncontrolled security cameras in Serb dominated north Kosovo

On [February 15, 2022](#), KALLXO.com managing editor Kreshnik Gashi and KALLXO.com assistant editor and journalist Adelina Ahmeti published an article on Balkan Insight regarding security cameras that were identified by BIRN in public areas of Serbian-majority, specifically in northern Kosovo, which are not under the control of the Kosovo police.

March

BIRN Fact-Check: Do Serbia and Kosovo Really Cooperate on Court Cases

On [March 1, 2022](#), KALLXO.com researcher and legal officer Blerta Iberdemaj and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published a fact-checking article on Balkan Insight regarding judicial cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo. Despite a 2013 agreement on “mutual legal assistance” brokered by the European Union, cooperation on criminal cases is far from being properly implemented, according to BIRN's findings.

Kosovo Arrests 48 Police, 2 Customs Officers, for Border Bribery

[On March 14, 2022](#), KALLXO.com assistant editor and journalist Adelina Ahmeti and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published an article on Balkan Insight about a mass raid in which authorities arrested 50 border police and customs officials suspected of taking bribes after a ten-month investigation codenamed ‘Pika’ [‘The Point’].

Kosovo Activists Protest After MPs Vote Against Same-Sex Unions

[On March 17, 2022](#), KALLXO.com journalist Ilirjana Hoti and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published an article on Balkan Insight regarding human rights and LGBT+ activists' action after Kosovo's parliament failed to adopt a draft civil code, mainly because of an article paving the way for the legalization of same-sex unions.

April

Kosovo Courts Too Lenient in Femicide Sentences, NGO Warns

[On April 1, 2022](#), KALLXO.com junior monitor Arlinda Mehmeti and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published an article on Balkan Insight regarding NGO warnings about Kosovo courts. These courts were sending the wrong message to women and society by routinely reducing life sentences for men found guilty of murdering their wives.

July

Kosovo Prosecutorial Council Scraps Recruitment Call After Test Leak

On [July 14, 2022](#), KALLXO.com assistant editor and journalist Adelina Ahmeti and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published an article on Balkan Insight about the cancellation of a recruitment call for prosecution posts after the Chief Prosecutor in Gjakova/Djakovica mistakenly sent written test questions to a BIRN journalist.

August

Kosovo Allocates 40 Million Euros for Serbs' Unpaid Electricity

On [August 10, 2022](#), KALLXO.com journalist Arta Sopi and Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent Xhorxhina Bami published an article on Balkan Insight about the allocation of another 40 million euros by the Kosovo Government for unpaid energy bills in the four Serb-majority municipalities in the north to honor its obligations to the European network for energy transmission.

November

Kosovo Serbs Continue Mass Resignations from State Institutions

On [November 7, 2022](#), Adelina Ahmeti, assistant editor and journalist for KALLXO.com, Xhorxhina Bami, Balkan Insight Kosovo correspondent, and Milica Stojanovic, Balkan Transitional Justice correspondent, published an article on Balkan Insight about the continued mass resignation of Kosovo Serbs from Kosovo institutions, such as policemen who handed over their uniforms, weapons, and cuffs.

Kosovo's Kurti Feels the Heat Over License Plates Crisis

On [November 30, 2022](#), KALLXO.com journalist Ilirjana Hoti and Balkan Insight editor Përparim Isufi published an article on Balkan Insight about Kosovo's Prime Minister feeling the heat over the license plate crisis, receiving criticism from all sides both at home and abroad when the crisis erupted.

December

Serb Ex-Policeman Pleads Not Guilty to Kosovo War Crimes

On [December 14, 2022](#), Laurant Berisha, monitor and junior researcher for KALLXO.com, and Balkan Insight editor Përparim Isufi published an article on Balkan Transitional Justice about former Serb policeman Caslav Jolic, who is accused of committing war crimes by assaulting civilians in the municipality of Istog/Istok in 1998, and denied the charges against him as his trial opened in Pristina.

SOCIAL MEDIA PERFORMANCE

Video and televised productions published on KALLXO.com

Facebook



Reach:

5,343,495

Engagements:

66,956,284

Number of followers:

471,044

(significant boost in followers compared to 2021)

YouTube



Views:

3,255,182

Watched time (hours):

249.200

Subscribers:

33,917

Impressions:

34,520,450

Twitter



Impressions:

10.545

Number of followers:

3,678

Instagram



Number of followers:

33.221

MONITORING AND ADVOCACY

In 2022, BIRN Kosovo's team of court monitors, legal officers, and advisors monitored a total of 97 court hearings and submitted 620 legal requests/complaints to relevant public institutions in Kosovo, of which around 549 were requests for access to official documents and information. As a result of BIRN's monitoring and the resultant violations found, eleven (11) requests for opening disciplinary procedures against six (6) judges and five (5) prosecutors were initiated. This included the suspension of one (1) judge and one (1) prosecutor, a reduction in salary for one (1) judge, and a public admonition for one (1) prosecutor.

BIRN Kosovo and its legal officers actively contributed to legislative changes by participating in working groups, panels, conferences, workshops, and group meetings to provide feedback and recommendations on legislative processes. The laws and strategies on which BIRN Kosovo provided input during the drafting process include: the National Strategy for the Prevention and Combating of Terrorism 2023-2028, the Vetting process in the justice system, the Bureau for confiscation of unlawfully acquired assets, the Criminal Procedure code, the Civil Code, the Law on the Prosecution Council of Kosovo, the Law on Disciplinary Responsibility of Judges and Prosecutors, the Law on the Agency for the Prevention of Corruption, the Law on declaration, origin and control of property and gifts, the draft law on the Independent Media Commission, and the draft law on cyber security. BIRN Kosovo's Legal Office also gained and provided expertise by participating in more than 60 public discussions, workshops, conferences, and meetings.

In 2022, as a result of citizen reports submitted to KALLXO.com, BIRN Kosovo started to film field inspections with the Tax Administration of Kosovo (TAK) and the Labour Inspectorate. Kallxo cameras were used to inspect more than 50 different businesses throughout Kosovo based on citizen complaints, such as workers' rights violations and unpaid pension funds. As a result, more than 100 employees were found to not have employment contracts, and were given the opportunity to formalize contracts in accordance with Kosovo Labour Law, ensuring they receive the benefits and job security they deserve. Several employers were also fined. These actions were periodically filmed by Kallxo and broadcasted in a series of TV reports, which encouraged more reporting by the public.

During the year, KALLXO.com's investigation found that the public enterprise "Trepca JSC" had not paid pension funds to its employees, resulting in the company owing a total of 9 million euros.

Following up on letters from KALLXO.com's legal office, the State Prosecutor began investigating public job vacancies in the Tax Administration for suspicions related to discrimination and unequal treatment of candidates. Out of 500 candidates, only 20 tax inspectors were employed.

June

On June 21, 2022, BIRN Kosovo and I/KS launched and published the 16th Court Monitoring Report entitled "[Impunity to Corruption](#)", which highlighted the year 2021. The report analyzed 40 corruption case verdicts from 2021 and demonstrated that Kosovo courts did not follow Supreme court guidelines in their punitive verdicts. The report highlights the low sentences often imposed in corruption cases and the circumstances considered for these lower sentences, revealing that there is often no justification for aggravating or mitigating circumstances in court judgments in corruption cases.

“This report, and these cases that have been under the magnifying lens of the monitors, should be placed under the magnifying lens of the mechanisms of the Judicial Council on the issue of performance and professionalism of judges or trial panels that have issued such decisions”.

Albulena Haxhiu

Minister of justice

“The report and the data it contains are useful to the judicial system. The Supreme Court’s rules on criminal policy must be implemented in the future along with clear procedures, in order to prevent organizations that monitor the legal system from reaching different conclusions on the same problems”.

Enver Peci

President of the Supreme Court

“In the process of furthering judicial reform, the subject of punitive policy in corruption cases has a specific relevance”.

Albert Zogaj

Chairman of the Kosovo Judicial Council

December

On December 29, 2022, BIRN Kosovo published a report titled [**“The Justice System’s Handling of Cases with Terrorism Charges in 2022”**](#) based on its direct monitoring of the justice system. The report is focused on the performance of Kosovo’s justice system in dealing with terrorism cases.

On December 29, 2022, BIRN Kosovo published a report [**“The Weary Fight Against Endemic Corruption in 2022”**](#), based on its direct monitoring of the justice system. The report is focused on the performance of the Kosovo justice system in dealing with corruption cases.

TRAINING & MEDIA DEVELOPMENT

In 2022, BIRN Kosovo provided 45 training sessions, workshops, and webinars to 704 beneficiaries, of which 379 were women. These activities targeted professional journalists, junior journalists, students of journalism, politics and law, other young people, high school students, civil society organizations, public officials, court monitors, prosecutors, judges, teachers, psychologists, and other stakeholders. The topics covered included fake news, fact-checking, investigative journalism, media ethics, protection of sources, public speaking, the use of judicial data, reporting on protests, terrorism, violent extremism and radicalization, environmental issues, effective advocacy, and labor rights

January

On [January 20, 2022](#), BIRN Kosovo organized a training session on fact-checking methodologies with journalists in Gjilan. The session was led by Kreshnik Gashi, and Visar Prebreza, both Managing Editors at KALLXO.com. The training covered the IFCN standards, basics of fact-checking, and different types of fake news production formats, including misinformation, fake news, deep fakes, and other related topics. Participants also had the opportunity to practice detecting fake news with the trainers. Fifteen participants attended this training, of which 10 were women.

On [January 27, 2022](#), BIRN held another training session on fact-checking methodologies with journalists in Prizren. The workshop trainers were Kreshnik Gashi and Visar Prebreza, who covered the same topics as in the previous training, including IFCN standards, fundamentals of fact-checking, and distinguishing between disinformation, fake news, deep fakes, and other types of fake news. A total of 19 journalists and journalism students from Prizren attended the training, of which 8 were women. This training was part of the project “Promoting fact-checking to combat false news and misinformation in Kosovo”, funded by the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo.

February

On [February 11, 2022](#), BIRN held a training session on fact-checking methodologies with journalists in Pristina. The training was held by two trainers, Kreshnik Gashi and Visar Prebreza, Managing Editors of KALLXO.com. A total of 25 journalists and journalism students were trained on fact-checking principles and methodologies, of which 18 were women. This training was part of the project “Promoting fact-checking to combat false news and misinformation in Kosovo”, which was funded by the U.S. Embassy in Kosovo. The project aimed to combat fake news and misinformation, provide practical training for aspiring journalists, and promote public knowledge about professional journalism by developing a platform that combines public data and fact-checking sources.

March

On [March 3 and 5, 2022](#), BIRN held training workshops on the use of judicial data with students of the Faculty of Law at the Universities of Pristina and Prizren as part of the “Data 4 Fighting Harmful Narratives in the Judiciary” initiative, which was supported by the Millennium Foundation Kosovo (MFK) and the Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC). The fundamental goal of this initiative was to train law students at Kosovo’s institutions to use judicial data as part of their studies. In total, 77 students participated in the training sessions, which were led by Labinot Leposhtica, the monitoring coordinator of BIRN Kosovo Legal Office. Following the training, students from both universities were eligible to compete for an award for the best seminar papers based on judicial data. The two selected pieces were transformed into journalistic stories and published in the “Living in Kosovo” publication under the guidance and mentorship of the BIRN editorial staff. Two students could each receive €200 for their work.

On **March 10 and 11**, 2022, BIRN held a training session with young journalists in the municipality of Gjilan on fact-checking principles. On the first day, Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, spoke about reporting, the public profile that journalists should maintain, how to develop contracts with sources of information, protection of sources, and how to build trust. Visar Prebreza, managing editor at KALLXO.com, spoke on how to initiate research and how to secure information from open data platforms. Lastly, Valdet Salihu, producer of the TV programme “Kallxo Pernime”, provided insight into different production techniques, photographs, and video footage. On the second day, practical activities were conducted in which participants practiced their techniques in fact-checking and detecting fake news. A total of 16 journalists participated in the training course, of which 12 were women and three were from Serb, Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptian minority communities.

On **March 25**, 2022, BIRN held a training for journalists and journalism students aimed at providing them with the necessary knowledge and skills for reporting on protests, with a particular emphasis on violent ones. The training was divided into two sessions. Amir Gërguri, Head of Specialized Units in the Kosovo Police, presented the first speech and elaborated on communications with security entities in emergency crisis situations. The second session was led by Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, who spoke about safety and ethical emergency crisis reporting. The training was organized as part of the project “Ensure a safe space for journalists during protest reporting”, which is supported by the European Commission. A total of 18 journalists and journalism students attended the training.

On **March 28**, 2022, BIRN held a regional workshop aimed at preventing extremism and terrorism in Kosovo through a reintegration and resocialization process for returnees from Middle Eastern conflict zones. The workshop was divided into three sessions. The first session, delivered by Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, focused on the state’s vision of preventing radicalism and violent extremism that leads to terrorism and reflecting this vision to the wider public. The second session was delivered by Vehbi Mujku, director of the Center for Social Welfare in Pristina, and focused on the role of the Centers in the early detection of radical behavior and the treatment of those impacted by violent extremism. Lastly, Luljeta Berisha delivered the third session, which emphasized the early diagnosis of radical behaviors in children and therapy for trauma. A total of 25 representatives from this Center participated in the workshop, of which 14 were women.

April

On **April 4**, 2022, BIRN Kosovo, in partnership with Internews Kosova and FindBug and supported by the U.S. Embassy in Prishtina, marked International Fact-Checking Day with an in-person and webinar conference to address the hazards of malevolent foreign influences and solutions to counter them. This conference gathered journalists, media professionals, media regulators, and technology experts to share their experience in robust fact-checking practices from around Kosovo, the region, and the world. The conference was opened by BIRN Kosovo’s executive director, Jeta Xharra, who emphasized the real threats of misinformation, deception, and false news emanating from Russia, China, and Turkey. The panel discussions, led by Xharra, were joined by representatives from leading global publications and institutions, including Enock Nyariki from the International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN), Jasna Jelisić from the European External Action Service, Rainer Schüller from Der Standard in Austria, Ed Vulliamy from The Guardian/ObsERVER in the UK, and Svitlana Slipchenko from VoxCheck at VOX Ukraine. More than 60 people attended the event in person at Prishtina’s Kino Armata, with a comparable number tuning in online via Zoom.

May

On **May 12, 2022**, BIRN held the second regional workshop of the “Resilient Community Program”, which was financed by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF). The workshop was divided into two sections. The first presentation, given by Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, focused on the state’s vision of combating radicalism and violent extremism that leads to terrorism, and how to express this vision in public communications. Mursel Zymberi, Director of the Centre for Social Welfare in the municipality of Gjilan, delivered the second session. This workshop was attended by 18 representatives from Centers for Social Welfare and members of other municipal institutions. By continually offering training sessions and workshops, BIRN Kosovo strives to help Kosovo’s democratic transition as well as the implementation of human rights and media freedom.

On **May 19, 2022**, BIRN hosted the second edition of Green Energy Days, a high-level conference in Pristina, as part of the “Europeanisation of Kosovo’s Environmental Agenda” project supported by the European Union Office in Kosovo and implemented by BIRN Kosovo, Bankwatch, ERA Group, and TV Mreža. The conference, featuring three discussion panels, brought together senior leaders and decision-makers from Kosovo and the region to discuss the green energy future of the Western Balkans and the challenges of decarbonization. Additionally, BIRN used this event to launch a new position paper on Kosovo’s National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), which included 32 concrete recommendations on how to move the country towards an energy-efficient and 100 percent renewable economy. A total of 65 people attended the conference, of which 27 were women.

On **May 20, 2022**, BIRN organized a training session with duty bearers, including police investigators, labor inspectors, and prosecutors, to strengthen their capacity to work with cases of workplace injuries and other labor rights violations. The aim of the training was to increase the capacity of duty bearers to deal with cases of injuries at work and labor rights abuses while applying the appropriate practices to handle labor violations, especially criminal ones related to workplace injuries. BIRN Kosovo invited three speakers with expertise in the field to deliver the training, including Agim Millaku, the Chief Inspector of the Labor Inspectorate in Kosovo, Prosecutor Bekim Kodraliu, and Judge Nexhat Qallapeku. The guest speakers spoke on topics such as criminal offenses in the workplace, safety in the workplace, and the importance of securing and preserving key evidence. The training was attended by 24 participants in total, including police investigators, prosecutors, and labor inspectors from different regions in Kosovo, such as Pejë/Peć, Prizren, Mitrovicë/Mitrovica, Gjilan/Gnjilane, and Podujeva/Podujevo, among others. Among the 24 participants, seven were women and one was from the Serbian community.

July

On **July 22, 2022**, BIRN held the third workshop as part of the “Resilient Community Program” funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, GCERF. This workshop aimed to improve the role of Centers for Social Welfare and appropriate municipal directorates in the reintegration and resocialization of returnees from Middle Eastern conflict zones to prevent violent extremism and terrorism in Kosovo. The workshop was divided into two sections. The first presentation, given by Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, focused on the state’s vision for combating radicalism and violent extremism leading to terrorism, as well as how to express this vision in public communications. The second speech was presented by Gani Mustafa, Director of the Mitrovica Municipal Center for Social Work. In total, 15 representatives from this center attended the workshop.

On **July 25-29**, 2022, BIRN hosted its first “Anti-Disinformation Summer School” in Prishtina, training students and young journalists from various communities throughout Kosovo on recognizing and refuting fake news and disinformation, as well as developing their fact-checking journalism skills. The sessions included training modules delivered by renowned local journalists and editors, discussion sessions by distinguished guest speakers in the field of journalism and beyond, Q&A sessions with representatives from Kosovo’s public institutions, and field trips to cultural sites in and around Prishtina. In total, 19 participants attended the summer school, of which 11 were women. One participant attended the event online through Zoom, while the other 18 attended in-person. Five (5) of the 19 participants were from Kosovo’s minority populations - three from the Bosniak community, one from the Roma community, and one from the Turkish community. The Anti-Disinformation Summer School was part of the project “Contribute to strengthening openness and accountability of the Kosovo administration and enhance citizens’ knowledge on disinformation”, supported by the Swiss embassy in Kosovo.

September

On **September 27**, 2022, BIRN organized a training module for journalists on reporting labor rights, which brought together 20 journalists from different communities. The participants learned more about reporting on injuries at work, workplace safety, mistreatment and breaches of employees’ rights, lack of employment contracts, annual leave and maternity leave, among others. The training was held by Kreshnik Gashi and Visar Prebreza, two editors of KALLXO.com, and guest speakers were Hekuran Nikçi, Chief Inspector of the Labor Inspectorate, and Agim Millaku, Deputy Chief Inspector of Safety at Work. Thirteen of the 20 journalist participants were women, and four were from minority communities. The participants were also encouraged to apply for the EUR 500 bursary to write stories related to important issues such as labor rights.

On **September 28, 2022**, BIRN organized a regional workshop in the Prizren area to assist returnees from Middle Eastern conflict zones with their reintegration and resocialization. Kreshnik Gashi, managing editor of KALLXO.com, led the workshop, which focused on the state’s strategy for combating radicalism and violent extremism that leads to terrorism, as well as how to communicate this vision to the public. Twelve representatives from the aforementioned institutions attended the session, and five of them were women. This was BIRN Kosovo’s fourth session as part of the “Resilient Community Program” funded by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund, GCERF.

November

On **November 12**, 2022, BIRN held a training in Mitrovica on fact-based journalism and media literacy organized in cooperation with Gračanica Online. The training brought together 15 Albanian and Serb journalists representing media such as Radio Television of Mitrovica, Gračanica Online, Kossev, Veriu Info, and Radio Gorazdevac, as well as students from the “Isa Boletini” University of Mitrovica’s Faculty of Law and from North Mitrovica. The training was delivered by BIRN editors Kreshnik Gashi and Visar Prebreza, who have extensive experience in carrying out investigations and reporting, as well as providing training for media and relevant stakeholders.

On **November 25**, 2022, BIRN Kosovo held a training course in Gračanica on fact-checking in cooperation with Gračanica Online. The training promoted cooperation among journalists to conduct research using advanced fact-checking techniques. The training brought together 23 Albanian, Serb, and Roma journalists representing media such as Ulpiana Press, Gračanica Online, Radio Television of Gračanica, Riznica, representatives of Civil Society Organizations, The Ideas Partnership, Balkan Sunflowers Kosova, CPT, and students from Gračanica, Prishtina, and Mitrovica.

On **November 25**, 2022, BIRN organized a workshop in the Gjakova area to enhance the role of Centres for Social Welfare, Municipal Directorates of Education, Emergencies and Security, Health and Mental Health, and other relevant institutions in reintegrating and resocializing returnees from Middle Eastern conflict zones. Led by Labinot Leposhtica, legal officer at KALLXO.com, the session focused on the state's strategy for combating radicalism and violent extremism that leads to terrorism and communicating this vision to the public. The session was attended by 11 representatives from the aforementioned institutions, of which three were women. This was BIRN Kosovo's fifth session as part of the "Resilient Community Program" supported by the Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund (GCERF).

On November 30th, BIRN organized a training workshop on the topic of "Respecting ethical standards on combating gender-based misinformation and avoiding sexist language in media reporting". The training brought together 23 participants of diverse ethnic backgrounds, consisting of 12 Albanians, 6 Serbs, 2 Roma, 1 Egyptian, and 2 Bosniak participants. The participants also had diverse gender representation, with 11 men and 12 women. The workshop was attended by representatives from various institutions, including the University of Haxhi Zeka - Law Faculty, media outlets, civil society organizations, Gracanica Online, Radio Gjakova, Radio Goraždevac, Peja on Focus online platform, Roma in Action, Mladi Volonteri, and NPU.

FUNDING IN 2022

Throughout 2022, BIRN Kosovo depended on the support of a wide range of Western governments, independent and public partners, and donors to continue its broad impact and sustain the organization's internal capacities. The BIRN Kosovo team profoundly appreciates its donors' steadfast support, which further fortified BIRN Kosovo in its aim to be a watchdog organization, monitoring the work of public institutions, and strengthening Kosovo's progress towards implementing EU standards.

BIRN Kosovo is looking forward to maintaining, nurturing, and strengthening its existing relationships with key donors while continuing to broaden and deepen its funding base. A strong and growing base of support will be essential to continue our work.

Below is the list of donors who supported BIRN Kosovo in 2022, in alphabetical order:



- **Austrian Development Agency (ADA)** supports the "A Paper Trail to Better Governance" project that works to promote the rule of law, accountability and transparency in the Balkans. More than 200 journalists have been trained in investigative skills and given special, in-depth knowledge of the particular field they are researching. Through the extensive use of public documents, the investigations are exposing wrongdoing in government and public and private companies and

among powerful individuals. The project also addresses the transparency of public institutions in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.



- Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) Global, LLC funds the “Supporting CSOs and/or media to advance investigative journalism and increase high-quality media content on procurement and public

finance irregularities”. This project aims to increase transparency and accountability from local governance institutions by producing and publishing stories on public spending abuses, institutional wrongdoings and corrupt affairs. It aims to help build the capacity of journalists and journalism students to monitor and report about corruption, public procurement and public expenditure.



- Development Alternatives Incorporated (DAI) Global, LLC funds the “Supporting CSOs to monitor procurement activities in the USAID KMI Phase 1 municipalities and Ministry of Health” project.

This project aims to contribute to an increase in transparency and accountability in local government institutions by monitoring procurement activities at local and central levels and publishing a report on public spending abuses, institutional wrongdoings and corrupt affairs.



**Funded by
the European Union**

- European Union Office in Kosovo supports the “Protecting and Promoting Labour Rights of Vulnerable Groups in the Labour Market” project. His project aims to improve the

working conditions for vulnerable categories of employees, notably within the private sector, including workplace health and safety for women and men, through the promotion of social dialogue between workers and duty bearers. This will be achieved through activities such as the development of a special section platform to report the violations of labour rights, monitoring and reporting the employment cases where the employees were victims of work injuries, capacity building and training of the duty bearers, capacity building training of the CSOs, journalists and human rights activists, raising public awareness on the Labour Law, the establishment of the consortium of CSOs to advocate for changes in the Labour law, sub-granting awards for CSOs, lawyers, and other registered entities to promote labour rights. These activities will ensure the effective implementation, quality of legal services, and creation of sustainable structures for future work in promoting labour rights.



**Funded by
the European Union**

- European Union supports the regional “Reporting Digital Rights and Freedoms” project that aims to enhance the knowledge and skills of media and civil society to monitor digital

rights violations and disinformation, assert the right to information and respond to abuses in the digital sphere. The project will work on improving the capacities of journalists and organizations by providing them with mentorship, editorial guidance, legal and grant support to increase policy and advocacy efforts, and equip target groups with the skills to track and respond to digital rights violations.



- Global Community Engagement and Resilience Fund through ATRC supports the “Resilient Community Program” that works towards seeks to strengthen local and national level methods and tools related to rehabilitation and reintegration (R&R)

programs and preventing and countering violent extremism (P/CVE) issues in general; strengthen coordination mechanisms used by governmental and non-governmental stakeholders working on R&R and P/CVE issues in Kosovo; enhance capacities of government actors, frontliners/practitioners, and non-state actors working on PVE and R&R; and strengthen social cohesion while also mitigating stigma among receiving communities towards returning foreign terrorist fighters (RFTF) to support their R&R. This programme targets seven regions across Kosovo, with a higher focus on Prishtina, Gjilan, Ferizaj and Mitrovica.



Ambasciata d'Italia
Pristina

- Italian Embassy in Kosovo supports the “Media as a means to improve the transparency of the justice system and the fight against terrorism and violent extremism” that aims to contribute to making justice institutions in Kosovo more transparent and accountable, thereby increasing public demand for the enhancement of their performance. BIRN Kosova will implement activities such as monitoring and analysing court hearings on

corruption and terrorism cases, and writing and publishing articles to increase public awareness and institutional facilitation of education and training programs for convicted fighters returned from war zones.



**MILLENNIUM
FOUNDATION
KOSOVO**

- Millennium Foundation Kosovo - supported BIRN to fight fake news and misinformation by monitoring media, provide hands-on training for journalists and improve public awareness regarding the judicial system by establishing

a platform that utilizes public data and fact-checking resources. As part of the solution, project partners including D4D, BIRN, I/KS, and FindBug will implement activities such as: the launching of the database for easier access to fact-based information related to the judicial system cases and regulations, publishing articles and infographics on KALLXO.com, broadcasting TV debates on “KALLXOPernime”, organizing workshops, Tuesday salons, and forums with judicial officials, young politicians, journalists, etc, and awarding fellowships to journalists to write in-depth investigative articles.



MILLENNIUM
CHALLENGE CORPORATION
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

- Millennium Challenge Corporation



- **Balkan Trust for Democracy** supports the “Exposing malpractices of public institutions in Kosovo’s health sector” project. BIRN Kosovo produced and broadcast ten (10) televised programs, including investigations on.

KALLXOPërnime, drafted, and published 35 follow-up articles and investigations, and submitted at least 10 legal letters and findings from the programs as well as requests for access to information and public documentation. Through successful completion of project activities, project outcomes have been achieved through exposing corrupt and unjust practices in the healthcare system and informing more than 500,000 citizens, and addressing such issues to around 60 institutions, including those of the health sector



- **The Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)** provides BIRN Network with core institutional support in order to implement the overall BIRN Network strategy, including BIRN Kosovo.



- **U.S. Embassy in Kosovo** supported the “Promoting fact-checking journalism to combat fake news and misinformation in Kosovo” project. The purpose of this project was to fight fake news and misinformation, provide hands-on training for aspiring journalists and improve public awareness regarding professional journalism by establishing a platform that utilizes public data and fact-checking resources.



UNMIK

-**UNMIK** supports the “Addressing Misinformation through Fact-checking Journalism” project. This project aims to contribute to combating the spread of fake news and disinformation in

Kosovo by raising awareness and promoting fact-checking reporting among the people of Kosovo and supporting fact-checking journalism. The project aims to increase public awareness on fake news and disinformation, especially among marginalized groups such as women, the young and members of non-majority communities.



USAID
NGA POPULLI AMERIKAN
OD AMERIČKOG NARODA

- **USAID (Kosovo)** supports BIRN through the Kosovo Property Governance Activity (PGA). In the scope of the project, BIRN Kosovo engages to promote transparency, accountability and awareness raising on the property rights and governance in Kosovo.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Federal Department of Foreign Affairs FDF

- Swiss Embassy in Kosovo (Federal Department for Foreign Affairs, FDFA) supports the “Contribute to Increasing Transparency and Accountability of Kosovo Govt and Raise Awareness of Disinformation” project. This project aims to improve inter-community

relations by facilitating spaces for Albanians, Serbs and those from other ethnic communities to interact, while also providing a channel through which members of various Kosovo communities can express their grievances and their hopes for the future. Furthermore, the project aims to increase public awareness and understanding of fake news and disinformation among citizens and particularly among young people from different communities in Kosovo.



Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft
Confédération suisse
Confederazione Svizzera
Confederaziun svizra

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation SDC



- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC) through UNDP

funds the Support to Anticorruption Efforts in Kosovo. SAEK III will support the implementation of the new anti-corruption legislation and progressing towards repatriation of stolen assets, while

completing a robust corruption prevention system. In the scope of the project, Internews Kosova and BIRN Kosova are UNDP implementing partners in producing KALLXO.com, enabling citizens to report various types of misuse and corruption. The number of citizen reports has increased tremendously since its inception to over 12,000 credible reports in 2022. This was done thanks to its remarkable follow-up on stories through legal analysis and exceptional investigative journalism that



NDI

- National Democratic Institute, NDI supports the “Strengthening Civil Society Anti-Corruption Capacity in Energy and Environment Issues in Kosovo” project. The project aims to strengthen the legal basis for proper environmental protection

for national parks and increase the efficiency of this mechanism through good management. BIRN Kosova, as leader of the civil society coalition, will implement various activities including analysis and research, aiming to identify and expose corruption related to protected areas/national parks, focused on the Drini and Mirusha rivers, including the Ibar.

CHALLENGES AHEAD

BIRN Kosovo continues to maintain its upstanding position and consistency in its operations and activities, and aims to elevate the standard of real investigative journalism in the country. The organization strives to maintain its position as the most reliable source of information for citizens by providing accurate and trustworthy information.

In Kosovo, the percentage of corruption continues to be high. The lack of transparency and institutional accountability continues to harm the public interest in the country, as well as individual citizens, particularly those from marginalized groups such as people from the LGBT+ community, members of the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptian communities, women, and people who do not align with the interest groups in power.

Under these circumstances, BIRN Kosovo, with KALLXO.com, has succeeded in channeling the concerns of a wide audience of citizens, including underrepresented groups, by applying a watchdog approach to all questions and concerns addressed to our platform. This has been achieved by investigating and conducting research on various topics, such as the flow of public funding, appointments of members on boards of public enterprises and agencies, organized crime and corruption, capital investments, labor rights in the public and private sector, tax evasion, and public security in the country.

This scope and focus on activity would not be possible without the well-organized human and professional resources that function within the organization, especially its structure, which involves a team of researchers, monitors, legal officers, administration, and production, guided by a senior program manager, executive editor, and producer.

In 2022, the responsibility for committing to building a democratic and transparent society in Kosovo was expanded, with an emphasis on security. As Kosovo was not immune to the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, there was a need for fast, professional, fact-based, and vigilant reporting in the news. This contributed to the need for mobilization to prevent the contamination of the media environment, both from within and abroad.

The tensions in the north of the country, particularly in the municipalities inhabited by a Serb majority, were characterized by a boycott of Kosovo's institutions, order, and law that lasted beyond the accumulated time status. These tensions were further fueled by the developments between Russia and Ukraine.

The incidents that blocked the north of the country gained international attention. Initially, the resistance to changing illegal license plates and the blocking of border crossing points led to the exit of Serbs from Kosovo institutions in the northern municipalities, including the handing over of the mandates of the MP of Lista Srpska from the Parliament of Kosovo. These incidents escalated with the installation of barricades in the north, highlighting the rise of attacks on journalists during their reporting from the field.

Therefore, significant challenges lie ahead for BIRN Kosova in 2023, including increasing the protection of journalists from attacks, providing information resources, raising human and professional capacities in the current media market, and dealing with lawsuits that have no legal basis.

We look forward to addressing the identified challenges by contributing to the inclusion of the protection of journalism during the drafting process of relevant laws, such as the Law on Weapons. Our objective of ensuring safety for journalists while doing their job will be achieved by employing advocacy and awareness-raising activities, targeting Members of Parliament, decision-makers, the Independent Media Commission, and other relevant actors.

The sensitive nature of investigative research always makes the security of information sources more perplexing. We will address this challenge by aspiring to increase it through the establishment of new cooperation networks with local media, providing training, diversifying the variety of news in content and language, and conducting workshops in municipalities and community gatherings on the importance of reporting violations that are committed in their communities or that they witness in the area where they live.

Looking to further the professionalization of the current media landscape, BIRN Kosovo will work on providing opportunities for capacity building in fact-checking journalism and reporting standards for journalism students, journalists of media outlets in Kosovo, as well as internship and award programs for implementing journalistic investigations and producing reports on current affairs.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank staff members and interns who were part of BIRN Kosovo and I/KS in 2022:

Ana Ćup

Arbisa Shefkiu

Arianit Keka

Arnis Fushtica

Blendi Shaqiri

Diellza Luzha

Diellza Salihu

Donika Elshani

Drenushe Ramadani

Elza Tullari

Erolinda Uka

Fjolla Bici

Milena Maksimović

Rinesa Osmanaj

Yllka Hoxha

Zgjim Sefa

