

The Judiciary in Kosovo: Justice in Numbers, Not in Citizen Perceptions

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January 2026



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Access to justice represents an important element in the rule of law, and in strengthening justice delivery. This element continues to be challenging for justice institutions in Kosovo, which, in addition to the lack of budget, the large backlog of cases, and public attacks by senior state officials, continue to face a poor assessment in public perception.

Although positive developments within justice institutions are evident over the years, with particular emphasis on the judicial system, such as increased accountability, transparency, but also in the efficiency of case handling, these institutions still fail to meet citizens' expectations for fairness and independent decision-making.

In October 2025, GLPS published the [9th Edition of Rule of Law Performance Index in Kosovo \(RoLPIK\), and Index that](#), includes data from a survey conducted in June 2025 with 1065 respondents of different genders and communities. Its findings show that citizens consider that courts and prosecutors' offices continue to lack independence in decision-making and the phenomenon of political influence and bribery is present among officials of these institutions.

RoLPIK data show that only 40% of citizens assess that court decisions are based on the available facts and the country's legal framework, while the majority of judicial decisions are made under the influence of corruption or as a result of political influence. Regarding political influence, it is worrying that about 76% of respondents stated that politically influential persons are less likely to be convicted if any criminal proceedings are conducted against them. Therefore, citizens assess that political engagement can serve as a "shield" against the courts' convictions. Consequently, in line with these two indicators, the courts continue to be perceived as most influenced by politics, followed by the prosecution and the police.

Public trust in the courts and prosecution remains alarmingly low, driven in large part by persistent perceptions of bribery among officials and employees within these institutions. The data show that nearly half of respondents claim that employees in justice institutions ask for or accept bribes. According to those who consider the presence of the phenomenon of bribery, court employees are the ones who most often ask for or accept bribes, followed by prosecutors and police officers.

On the one hand, public trust in justice institutions remains deeply unsatisfactory, undermined by persistent perception of political interference and corruption among their officials. On the other hand, what remains crucial is citizens' willingness to yet report corruption or other criminal offenses if identified. In this regard, RoLPIK data highlight that around 80% of respondents expressed their willingness to cooperate with these institutions, giving a positive signal of civic activism to contribute to the fight against corruption and other negative phenomena.

When it comes to the rate of case clearance rate, the courts and prosecutors' offices in 2024 showed an efficiency rate of over 90%, among which it is worth highlighting the Special Chamber of the Supreme Court with 224% and the Office of the Chief State Prosecutor and the Appellate Prosecutor's Office with 100% rate of resolution of cases in relation to the number of cases received during this period of time.

The lack of positive results in the handling of high-profile corruption cases, including investigation, level of indictments, quality of trial and conviction rate, is also reflected in the citizen perception through the average assessment of institutional effectiveness in combating this phenomenon.

The justice system must hold accountable judges and prosecutors who, through action or inaction, fail to handle cases professionally, especially those of high public impact. Responsibility for low prosecution and conviction rates, delays, expired cases, and weak penalties in corruption and domestic violence cases must be addressed through institutional mechanisms, notably the Kosovo Judicial Council (KJC) and the Kosovo Prosecutorial Council (KPC).

However, despite budget constraints, limited staff capacities, heavy caseloads, and growing security risks, the clearance rate and the public disclosure of meetings, decisions, and reports by the KJC and KPC represent a positive step toward transparency and accountability.

From what was said above, it follows that in order to gain a higher level of citizen trust, beyond the statistical aspect, the judiciary must take concrete actions that result in legal, fair and impartial decision-making. Only in this way will the justice system demonstrate professionalism and an equal approach to each citizen regardless of social status, thus contributing to a more positive perception by the public and an increase in citizens' trust in these institutions. Finally, since justice institutions are obliged to judge based on the Constitution and the law, they must also reflect the expectations of citizens through decisions that carry the preamble "In the name of the people".



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