

Kosovo

Ethnicity in Kosovo

Group selection

We identify the following politically relevant ethnic groups: **Albanians, Serbs, Roma, Bosniaks, Turks Gorani** Group sizes originate from the 2011 census, which however excluded the Serb minority in the North, and are thus, harmonized with the group sizes of ethnic Serbs as obtained from the OSCE.

Power relations

2008-2021

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia on 17 February 2008. Albanians are the politically dominant demographic majority in Kosovo. For the entire period, Albanians are coded as “dominant” and all other groups as “powerless”.

Official and societal discrimination persists against Kosovo Serbs and Roma in employment, education, social services, language use, freedom of movement, the right to return, and other basic rights (²⁸⁶⁵). Although the Serbs and Roma face widespread societal and economic discrimination, they are not politically discriminated. Due to the international pressure associated with the creation of the new state, the Albanian majority is obliged to formally include Serbs and other minorities in the political process. For instance, as defined in the constitution, Serbs are included in the governing coalition, such as in 2011, when two ethnic Serbs filled minister positions (²⁸⁶⁶).

²⁸⁶⁵ [U.S. State Department, 2008-2009]

²⁸⁶⁶ [Republic of Kosovo Assembly, 2011]

However, the Serbs in Northern Kosovo mostly boycott elections and only the Serbs in the rest of Kosovo have voter participation rates similar to Albanians (²⁸⁶⁷). This indicates that an alleged exclusion of the Serbs is rather voluntary, because many ethnic Serbs do not accept Kosovo as an independent state and are still orientated towards Serbia, where from they receive support (e.g. welfare). The Serbs are not coded as being self-exclusionist or regionally autonomous, despite the separatist tendencies of the Serbs in northern Kosovo, because these northern Serbs do not constitute the majority of Serbs in Kosovo, who are spread across the entire country.

²⁸⁶⁷ [BBC, 2010]

In the first assembly (120 members) after independence, there were 24 ethnic minority members, including 10 Kosovo Serbs and 14 members of other groups, including ethnic Turks, Gorani, and Roma and Ashkali (²⁸⁶⁸). This indicates that these groups are politically relevant.

²⁸⁶⁸ [U.S. State Department, 2008-2009]

In the 2010 parliamentary elections, 100 seats were elected on the basis of national proportional representation. For the 20 minority reserved seats in the Kosovo parliament, 10 seats are reserved for Serbs, 4 seats for the Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians, 3 seats for the Bosniaks, Montenegrins, Croats, 2 seats for the Turks, and 1 seat for the Goranis (²⁸⁶⁹).

²⁸⁶⁹ [Election Guide, 2010]

In the following parliamentary election in 2014, the Serbs received 10 seats, the Roma 1, the Gorani 1, the Turks 3, the Bosniaks 2, the Ashkali 2 and the Egyptians 1 (²⁸⁷⁰). After the election, a constitutional crisis took place for several months, until a government was formed. The government coalition, however, still consists of Albanian representatives only.

²⁸⁷⁰ [European Union, 2014]

In line with the constitution, every government coalition is obliged to include Serbs and other minority groups in the cabinet whereas the definite number of the positions is determined by the overall number of the cabinet ministries. For example, after the 2017 parliamentary election, under the Haradinaj Government, there is one deputy prime minister from the Serbian List, the largest Serbian political party in Kosovo while the government has the highest number of ministers representing communities. To be more specific, three appointed Serbian ministers are in charge of the following ministries: Ministry of Local Government, ministry of Return and Ministry of Agriculture. In addition, Ministry of Public Administration is also filled by a non-majority community, in this case a Kosovo Turk (²⁸⁷¹). Yet, the Serb ministers remain without actual influence in the Albanian dominated government, their representation is considered token, and therefore we code the Serbs as “powerless”.

²⁸⁷¹ [Zeri, 2017]

Although an important agreement on relations between Serbia and Kosovo was reached in 2013, the relationship between the Kosovo Serbs and the Kosovo Albanians is tense (²⁸⁷²). The agreement was never fully implemented. The elections in 2014 were still marked by boycotts and a very low turnout in the Northern districts, and the “Association of Serb Majority Municipalities in Kosovo”, the founding of which had been proposed in the agreement and should facilitate the provision of local autonomy for Serbs, has never been established (²⁸⁷³).

²⁸⁷² [Spiegel, 2017]

As the dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia resumed in summer of 2020, the EU mediator for the dialogue Miroslav Lajcak, while in Serbia for an official visit, vowed to settle the status of the Municipal Association of Kosovo Serbs, which was agreed in 2013. The agreement foresees executive powers of Kosovo Serbs over economic development, education, health care and budgetary contributions coming directly from Serbia. On the other side, municipalities agree to full integration into Kosovo. However, the agreement has sparked much controversy within Kosovo and especially among the Vetevendosje Movement, which considers the Association hazardous to the Kosovo’s statehood and perceives it as a creation of de-facto Serbian mini-state (²⁸⁷⁴).

²⁸⁷³ [Group for Legal and Political Studies, 2017]

The situation between Kosovo and Serbia remains tense. An

²⁸⁷⁴ [Balkan Insight, 2020]

example to depict to the current situation is the "train" incident early on 2017. A train which was planned to set off from Belgrade to North Mitrovica, almost brought the two countries on the brink of a conflict, due to the slogan "Kosovo is Serbia" in 21 different languages. ⁽²⁸⁷⁵⁾. The situation worsened following the customs tariffs that Kosovo raised toward products from Serbia and BiH, initially at 10% and soon at 100% due to the harsh campaign for the withdrawal of Kosovo's recognition by Serbia ⁽²⁸⁷⁶⁾. This caused the resignation of four mayors of Kosovo Serb municipalities as a sign of protest ⁽²⁸⁷⁷⁾.

²⁸⁷⁵ [BBC, 2017]

²⁸⁷⁶ [Reuters, 2018]

²⁸⁷⁷ [Prishtina Insight, 2018]

Following the imposition of the 100% tariff on Serbian and Bosnian products, the dialogue facilitated by the EU was suspended in late 2018. The dialogue was set to resume virtually during summer of 2020 considering travel restrictions due to COVID 19, via a virtual summit hosted by France and Germany. During the same time, the special US envoy for Kosovo and Serbia Mr. Richard Grenell stated that while the EU would lead on political issues, the US would focus on the economic ones ⁽²⁸⁷⁸⁾. Nevertheless, the first virtual meeting was concluded with no concrete results while both parties maintained their positions ⁽²⁸⁷⁹⁾.

²⁸⁷⁸ [Balkan Insight, 2020]

²⁸⁷⁹ [Balkan Insight, 2020]

Under the auspices of the US Presidency, as warned for months in advance, Kosovo and Serbia signed a "historical" deal on September 4th 2020 focusing mainly on economic issues, such as the initiative to reinstate air and rail links between Prishtina and Belgrade and building new road and highways. However, the deal has a political connotation as well. For once, Serbia agreed to stop the ongoing campaign against Kosovo's independence for a year which in the past led to several countries revoking their recognition of the independence, whereas Kosovo agreed to suspend any application to international organizations for a year. Another topic of interest is the agreement between both governments to jointly work on the issue of missing persons, refugees and internally displaced people during the Kosovo war. The agreement triggered a lot of controversy in both countries, considered as a milestone by some and a failure by others including the opposition parties in Kosovo. The United States pledged to invest economically in both countries in order to stimulate economic cooperation throughout the course of next years. Its real implications are yet to be seen ⁽²⁸⁸⁰⁾.

²⁸⁸⁰ [Balkan Insight, 2020]

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Political status of ethnic groups in K

From 2008 until 2021

Group name	Proportional size	Political status
Albanians	0.866	DOMINANT
Serbs	0.078	POWERLESS
Roma	0.0228	POWERLESS
Bosniaks	0.015	POWERLESS
Turks	0.01	POWERLESS
Gorani	0.0058	POWERLESS



Figure 575: Political status of ethnic groups in Kosovo during 2008-2021.

Geographical coverage of ethnic groups in Kosovo

From 2008 until 2021

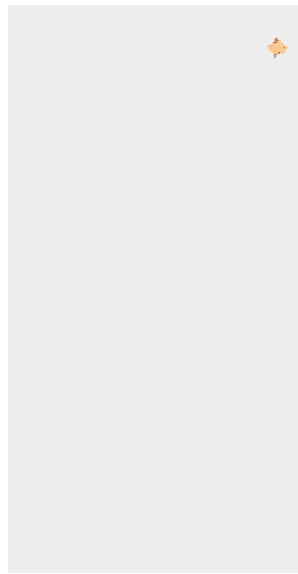


Figure 576: Map of ethnic groups in Kosovo during 2008-2021.

Group name	Area in km ²	Type
Albanians	9776	Regionally based
Serbs	1216	Regionally based
Bosniaks	645	Regionally based
Gorani	441	Regionally based
Turks	356	Regionally based
Roma	0	Dispersed

Table 210: List of ethnic groups in Kosovo during 2008-2021.