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Bajram Ibraj

KUB Tirana, Dardania College, bajramibraj@yahoo.com

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Key security challenges in Kosovo

Bajram Ibraj1

IKUB Tirana, Dardania College
bajramibraj@yahoo.com

Abstract:

The Republic of Kosovo since February 17, 2008, where it declared its independence and created its new state, is a free, independent and sovereign state. In this context, identifying and defining the main security challenges in the Republic of Kosovo is of particular interest.

The evaluation of the security sector strategic review analysis document, in relation to the comprehensive aspects of democratic institutions and contemporary organized crime, by the interviewees and respondents, identify the main threats and challenges to security in Kosovo.

The aim of this paper is to test the connection and impact that national security and its challenges have in relation to transnational organized crime in Kosovo.

This paper will address the following issues: Purpose and objectives of the paper; research question; working hypothesis; analytical model and methodology; the document "Security Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo"; key security challenges in Kosovo; trial of politicians and experts in both Albania and Kosovo and international experts on specific security challenges in Kosovo-comparative analysis; conclusions and recommendations.

Key words: Kosovo, security, key security challenges, comparative analysis, strategy.

Introduction

1. Purpose and the objectives of the paper

The paper focuses on the security situation in the Republic of Kosovo. The main objectives of the paper are focused on identifying and analyzing these aspects: *first*, on looking at national security challenges; *second*, in research at the local level, Kosovo; *third*, the judgment of experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts on the main challenges of national security in Kosovo - comparative analysis; *fourth*, comparative analysis of national security challenges based on the answers to questionnaires and in-depth interviews with state personalities, public and experts and the document national security strategy of the Republic of Kosovo, 2014.

1.1 The research question

The basic research question that the paper raises is. What are the main security challenges in Kosovo?

1.2 Working hypothesis

The paper aims to answer this hypothesis. The national security and functionality of Kosovo's security institutions remain conditional on the prevention, crackdown and fight against transnational organized crime.

1.3 Analytical model and methodology

The realization of the work has followed a methodology that is dictated by the subject of the work. The selected methodology is the analytical methodology combined with the qualitative approach, adapted to the purpose and objectives of the paper, the research question and the initial hypothesis.

For the preparation of this paper, two primary sources were used: the first primary source questionnaires and the second primary in-depth interviews. Two champions were also selected: The first champion was carefully selected by selecting 120 persons according to four target groups: 1. Personalities and senior state and public officials; 2. researchers, pedagogues, professors; 3. police officers and managers, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, security experts; 4. journalists, opinion leaders, civil society representatives. The sample was selected with persons from Albania, Kosovo and foreign experts. Meanwhile, in the second sample were selected 702 surveyed students of the faculties of Law and Security Studies in bachelor and master in four universities, of which two universities in Albania, and two universities in Kosovo. The University of Tirana and the University of Prishtina, Faculty of Law, as well as the ISPE-European Studies College for European Future, the Faculty of Security Studies in Prishtina, and the Tirana Security Academy. Both champions and target groups were selected in order to obtain the widest possible overview of the issues related to the fundamental challenges of national security and transnational organized crime, which are the subject of the work.

The research methodology is based on qualitative instruments such as documents, conventions, laws, 40 in-depth interviews, as qualitative resources for the hypothesis test. The data completed by the interviewees and respondents are included in a special program, the results are

processed. Tables and graphs and figures are produced on their basis. Data collection continued during the years 2015-2016. The basic demographic data of the respondents' educational institutions are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Basic demographic data of respondents' educational institutions.

Country	Educational Institution of the respondents	Nr. of respondents
Albania	Security Academy, Tirana	200
	University of Tirana, Faculty of Law	200
Kosovo	ISPE University College, Faculty of Security Studies, Prishtina	150
	"Hasan Prishtina" University, Faculty of Law, Prishtina	152
Total		702

The survey in two universities in Albania included 400 students or 56.98%, of which in the Security Academy, Tirana, 200 students or 28.50%, in the University of Tirana, Faculty of Law 200 students or 28.50%, and two universities in Kosovo with 302 students or 43.02%, of which in the University College ISPE Prishtina, 150 students or 21.36%, and in the University “Hasan Prishtina”, Prishtina 152 students or 21.64%.

The citizenship of the respondents results as follows: in Albania 400 students or 56.98%, in Kosovo 302 students or 43.02%. Whereas, the gender of the respondents is 376 females or 53.56%, and 326 males or 46.44% of the respondents. The field of study and the number of respondents are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Areas of study of respondents.

Nr.	Field of study	No. of respondents
1	Justice	352
2	Security Studies	150
3	Security and Criminal Investigations	170
4	Public Order and Security	30
Total		702

The analysis of the data shows that: out of 702 respondents, the field of study is, 352 students in law, 150 students in security studies, 170 students in security and criminal investigations, 30 students in public order and security. In the field of law in the first year were surveyed 166 students or 24%, in the second year 352 students or 47%, in the third year 50 students or 7% and in the fourth year 152 students or 22% of respondents.

1.3.1. Research model

The research model on which the paper is based is comparative analysis focusing on the local context, Kosovo.

1.3.2 Data collection and analysis

Due to the nature of the work, the scheme for data collection and analysis has gone through several stages such as: defining or selecting the model; model evaluation; the validity of the model in data collection; data management; statistical description; the structural analysis is based on, - the analysis "driven by selected models", and the analysis "driven by collected data"; through an "analytical laboratory", tabulation, graphing; conclusions and recommendations of the results.

2. Document of the National Security Strategy of the Republic of Kosovo, 2014

According to the Strategic Review Analysis document of the Security Sector of the Republic of Kosovo, March 2014, in the context of the functioning of democratic institutions, national security and the fight against transnational organized crime in Kosovo, among others, addresses the global security environment (section 4.2), the regional security environment (section 4.3) and the internal security environment (section 4.4) addressing the risk of organized crime (clause 4.4.5), corruption (clause 4.4.6), unconventional threats (section 4.5), weapons of mass destruction (point 4.5.1), terrorism (point 4.5.2), cybercrime (4.5.3), weapons of mass destruction (point 4.5.3) distribution of small arms (point 4.4). 4), extremism (point 4.4.3).

In the document of the Strategic Review Analysis of the Security Sector of the Republic of Kosovo, 2014, in point 4.4.5- organized crime it is written that: *“Another risk may be organized crime, which is not limited only within the territory of Kosovo but is a transnational / interstate problem. As such, it threatens and damages the rule of law and the perspective of economic development in Kosovo”*. While in point 4.4.6 Corruption, it is stated that: *“Another risk is corruption. Corruption undermines trust in public institutions and negatively affects economic development and Euro-Atlantic integration.”* While in point 4.5.2.Terrorism states that:

"Geographical position and Euro-Atlantic aspirations and close cooperation with countries that are part of Euro-Atlantic organizations make Kosovo vulnerable to terrorism. Kosovo considers terrorism and acts of terrorism not only as a danger and threat to itself but also to its friends and allies. The Republic of Kosovo is ready and made efforts to cooperate with all countries to prevent and reduce international terrorism and terrorist activities."

3. The main specific security challenges in Kosovo

Given that Kosovo is a new state emerging from the war, governed by UNMIK since June 1999, and after the start of building an independent state after the declaration of Independence on February 17, 2008, it manifests many security-related problems. and the main challenges arising from it. From June 10, 1999 until February 17, 2008, Kosovo was under the leadership of the UNMIK international mission, while from February 17, 2008 it continues to be a free, independent and sovereign state. The Republic of Kosovo has potential threats to the preservation of the country's territory, especially in North Mitrovica and Serb-majority municipalities. Transient threats are related to forms of manifestation of organized crime, such as: trafficking in migrants or other trafficking on the border with other neighboring countries, but also energy security, terrorism and natural disasters.

National security issues are of fundamental, important and crucial importance for every state, country and society, both internally and externally, as well as for regional and international cooperation with states and international organizations. Challenges, risks and threats to security, firstly, they must be recognized and evaluated and the strategies, documents and plans approved, and, secondly, measures must be taken for their rigorous implementation in order to create proper security, economic and social development. , country stability and the provision of life, well-being and human rights and freedoms. According to Alan Collins in his book *Contemporary Security Studies: A threat to national security is considered to be an action or a series of actions that (1) threaten, drastically and within a short period of time, the quality of life of the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens to substantially narrow the range of political choices available to the government of a state or to private, non-governmental entities (such as individuals, groups or corporations) within the state.*” Richard H. Ullman, “Redefining Security,” *International Security*, 8/1 (1983).¹ While, according to Barry Busan, Ole Waever and Jaap de Wilde in their book

¹ Collins, A., “*Contemporary Security Studies*”, published by UET Press, Tirana, 2010, page 133.

entitled: "Security: A new framework of analysis", this approach which became known as the Copenhagen School, the notion of sectoral security analysis called "Insurance" (insurance as an approach to security), security should be treated as an act of discourse, as a concrete action performed.² "Security" is a self-referential practice, where through this practice the issue becomes a security issue.³

Security is a matter for all citizens, states and international institutions, and it takes on a special significance for Kosovo as a new state and which aims to become part of NATO and the EU in the future.

The question arises: "Are the state and institutions in Kosovo able to successfully secure national security issues?" For example, the issues of potential threats to the preservation of the country's territory, especially in North Mitrovica and Serb-majority municipalities, the fight against terrorism, organized crime and corruption.

In order to recognize and define the main challenges of National Security in the Republic of Kosovo after studying the theoretical basis of legislation, National Security documents carefully selected the sample of 120 people and compiled and distributed questionnaire 1: "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania- Kosovo, 2008-2015". 65 people answered this question by answering question 2- What are the main challenges that threaten national security in the Republic of Kosovo? The main specific security challenges in Kosovo are presented in Table 3.

Below is Table 3, the main specific security challenges in Kosovo.

² Ibid., P. 89.

³ Ibid., P. 90.

Main challenges	Total	Experts from Albania	Experts from Kosovo	International experts
The relations with serbian state challenge and internal impact	13.80%	17.00%	9.80%	11.10%
The challenge of organized crime and criminal activities	8.40%	10.20%	8.20%	0.00%
The presence of the international factor	1.20%	0.00%	0.00%	11.10%
Territorial sovereignty of the country	8.40%	5.70%	14.80%	0.00%
The challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building	5.40%	8.00%	3.30%	0.00%
The challenge of economic development	9.60%	9.10%	11.50%	5.60%
Visa liberalization process and EU integration	1.20%	1.10%	0.00%	5.60%
Need to improve the capacity of the administration	1.20%	2.30%	0.00%	0.00%
Religious and political extremism	14.40%	15.90%	11.50%	16.70%
Emigration	1.80%	0.00%	3.30%	5.60%
International terrorism	9.00%	10.20%	8.20%	5.60%
Corruption	11.40%	10.20%	9.80%	22.20%
Improving police and military structures, policies and education	2.40%	2.30%	3.30%	0.00%
Challenges of abuse of power	1.20%	1.10%	1.60%	0.00%
The challenge of social development	3.60%	1.10%	6.60%	5.60%
Political instability and conflict	4.20%	2.30%	4.90%	11.10%
Challenges of the development of the rule of law	3.00%	3.40%	3.30%	0.00%

Source: Questionnaire 1 "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania-Kosovo, 2008-2015" (completed by public figures and security and justice experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts). Author's elaboration (2016).

Table 3. Main specific security challenges in Kosovo

According to the data presented by experts in Albania, experts in Kosovo and international experts, and comparative analysis, it turns out that 17 main, specific security challenges in Kosovo have been identified, and specifically; religious and political extremism; the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country (related, mostly, to the Mitrovica issue and which remains very important, at least, for the near future); corruption; economic development challenges; international terrorism; challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; territorial sovereignty of the country; the challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building; political instability and conflict; social development challenge; the challenge of developing the rule of law; improving police and military structures, policies and education; emigration; the challenge of abuse of power; the presence of the international factor; the process of visa liberalization and EU integration; the need to improve the capacity of the administration.

The first challenge is religious and political extremism, with 14.4%, of which international experts 16.7%, experts in Albania 15.9% and experts in Kosovo 11.5%. The second challenge is the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, with 13.8%, of

which experts in Albania 13.8%, international experts 11.1% and experts in Kosovo 9.8%. The third challenge is corruption, 11.4%, of which international experts 22.2%, experts in Albania 10.2% and experts in Kosovo 9.8%. The fourth challenge is the challenge of economic development, 9.6%, of which experts in Kosovo 11.5%, experts in Albania 9.1% and international experts 5.6%. The fifth challenge is international terrorism, 9%, of which experts in Albania 10.2%, experts in Kosovo 8.2% and international experts 5.6%. The sixth challenge is the challenge of organized crime and criminal activities, 8.4%, of which experts in Albania 10.2% and experts in Kosovo 8.2%. The seventh challenge is the territorial sovereignty of the country, 8.4%, of which experts in Kosovo 14.8% and experts in Albania 5.7%.

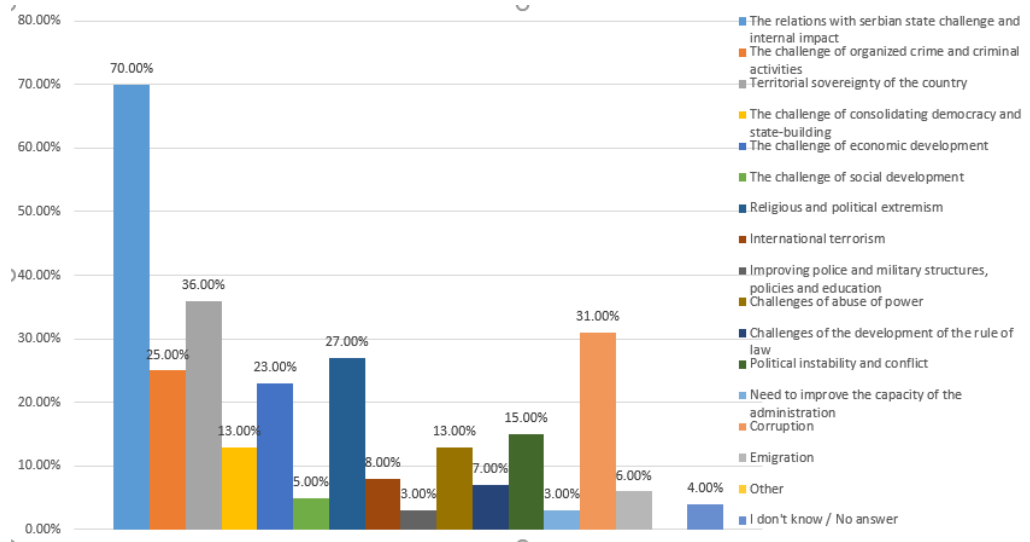
“According to the data available to the Kosovo Police from 1999 until now, only in the north of Kosovo 32 people have been killed, there have been about 150 cases of attacks with explosives and firearms, about 751 people injured, the destruction of Jarinjës has happened the and Brnjak border crossing points. There have been attacks on court facilities in northern Mitrovica, attacks on police station facilities, killing of a UNMIK special forces member, killing of a Kosovo Police officer, attacks on KFOR , to name a few.”⁴

Seven key specific security challenges have been identified in Kosovo. The first challenge is religious and political extremism, with 14.4%. The second challenge is the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country. The third challenge is corruption. The fourth challenge, the challenge of economic development. The fifth challenge is international terrorism. The sixth challenge is the challenge of organized crime and criminal activities, and the seventh challenge is the territorial sovereignty of the country. However, the concept of security is based on endangerment by the enemy, is a strategy as old as humanity itself and is a tool that continues to be in the service of power. (Bekim Baliqi, 2010: 24).

"In terms of security, the principle applies, according to which if you manage to have a sound communication and understanding, the level of security will be much higher, as this creates more friends instead of enemies. Therefore, relations with people, relations with the public, human behaviors are not a one-way street, but a two-way street where dialogue is required instead of monologue. (Bekim Baliqi, 2010: 46).

⁴Kosovo Police Report on Serious Crime and Organized Crime Threat Assessment 2013, page 21.

Identifying and analyzing the main security challenges in Kosovo through the answers to questionnaire 1 and in-depth interviews of public figures, politicians and security experts in Albania in Kosovo and international experts, a clear overview of these security challenges in Kosovo is presented. The main specific security challenges in Kosovo are presented in Figure 1 and Table 4.



Source: Questionnaire 2. "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania-Kosovo, 2008-2015". (completed by students of the faculties of Law and Security in Prishtina and Tirana). Author Elaboration (2016).

Figure 1. The main challenges that threaten national security in the Republic of Kosovo (student survey).⁵

Below is Table 4, the main challenges affecting national security in the Republic of Kosovo (student survey).

⁵We emphasize that the respondents were entitled to more than one answer (up to 3 selection options for each question).

Options	The relations with serbian state challenge and internal impact	The challenge of organized crime and criminal activities	Territorial sovereignty of the country	The challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building	The challenge of economic development	The challenge of social development	Religious and political extremism	International terrorism	Improving police and military structures, policies and education	Challenges of abuse of power	Challenges of the development of the rule of law	Political instability and conflict	Need to improve the capacity of the administration	Corruption	Emigration	Other	I don't know / No answer
The number of answers	493	175	254	89	161	33	191	55	23	92	49	105	24	217	43	0	27
%	70%	25%	36%	13%	23%	5%	27%	8%	3%	13%	7%	15%	3%	31%	6%	0%	4%

Source: Questionnaire 2. "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania-Kosovo, 2008-2015". (completed by students of the faculties of Law and Security in Prishtina and Tirana). Author Elaboration (2016).

Table 4. Main challenges that threaten national security in the Republic of Kosovo (student survey)⁶

According to the data of Figure 1 and Table 4 and its results that for the period 2008-2015, the following main challenges of national security in Kosovo have been identified: 1. the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country with 493 responses or 70%; 2. territorial sovereignty of the country with 254 responses or 36%; 3. corruption with 217 responses or 31%; 4. religious and political extremism with 191 responses or 27%; 5. Challenges of organized crime and criminal activities with 175 responses or 25%; 6. economic development challenges with 161 responses or 23%; 7. political instability and conflict in the country with 105 answers or 15%; 8. challenges of abuse of power with 92 responses or 13%; 9. challenges of consolidating democracy and state formation with 89 answers or 13%, etc.

Kosovo manifests problems and threats related to security and the main challenges arising from it. Threats and dangers in Kosovo are diverse. Thus, according to KCSS:

"Violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo is one of the high-level dangers. The activity of Serbian parallel structures north of the Ibar River as well as the lack of access of Kosovo institutions to 18% of the territory raises the need to analyze the situation on a periodic basis. This is especially true given the fact that widespread smuggling in this part of the territory is damaging Kosovo's budget."⁷

⁶We emphasize that the respondents were entitled to more than one answer (up to 3 selection options for each question)

⁷Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSS) Kosovo "Assessment of the Importance of the Kosovo Security Council in the Security Sector" Prishtina, December 2008, page 6.

Ernst Florian Winter states that:

“Kosovo is part of the Southern zone of Central Europe. The Western Balkans is a misnomer. The geopolitical environment of Central Europe has been neglected by both the United Nations and the European Union. “The precondition for the security of citizens and the representation of their interests is for a state to be a sovereign state, but also functional.” (Ernst Florian Winter, 2007: 25).

In-depth interviews were conducted with senior state, public, social, politicians, ministers, MPs, senior law enforcement officials, lawyers, researchers, professors, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, security experts of the State Police, journalists, opinion leaders, civil society representatives, as well as well-known experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts.

From the interview with Dr. Bajram Rexhepi ⁸, regarding the question: "What do you think about the most positive impact of state institutions, law enforcement and the fight against organized crime and cross-border trafficking in the northern part of Mitrovica?" , says that:

“In Kosovo, the northern part is a hotbed of crisis and a time bomb. Unfortunately, the state of Serbia is the generator of all evils. Organized crime does not recognize a nation and does not recognize a state, regardless of the measures taken by the respective states. Criminals find communication channels on both sides of the border, unfortunately on both sides of the Ibar River. The de jure north belongs to Kosovo, but is de facto connected to Serbia, which has paved the way for organized crime. national and transnational organized crime.”⁹

The main security challenges in Kosovo for PhD Candidat Rrahman Sulejmani are: *“Islamic extremism, lack of sovereignty in the entire territory of the Republic of Kosovo, lack of rule of law, unemployment and corruption in high state institutions”*.¹⁰ For Kujtim Bytyqi, they are: *“corruption, organized crime; narcotics trafficking and terrorism”*.¹¹ For PhD Candidat and General Reshat Maliqi, the specific security challenges in Kosovo are: *“Migration, terrorism, organized crime, corruption and the impact of politics on law and order”*.¹²

By comparing the answers to the questionnaires completed by senior state, public, social, politicians, ministers, MPs, senior law enforcement officials, lawyers, researchers, lecturers, professors, prosecutors, judges, lawyers, security experts and State Police, journalists, opinion

⁸Dr. Bajram Rexhepi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Kosovo (2002-2004), (*Moderate Prime Minister of Kosovo*) Minister of Interior in the Thaçi Government (2009-2014), politician, Member of the Assembly of Kosovo, Mayor of Mitrovica, Chairman of the Municipal Council of Mitrovica and Mayor of the southern part of the divided city of Mitrovica, Chairman of the branch of the PDK organization in Mitrovica, a well-known surgeon.

⁹The interview took place in the apartment of Dr. Bajram Rexhepi in North Mitrovica in Kosovo on 23.01.2016.

¹⁰PhD Candidate, Colonel Rrahman Sulejmani, Director of the Criminal Police Department in the Kosovo Police (2005-2009), security expert.

¹¹Doctoral student Kujtim Bytyçi, analyst for Security Policy in the Republic of Kosovo, security expert in Kosovo.

¹²PhD Candidat, General Reshat Maliqi General Director of Kosovo Police 2010-2011, Director of Strategic and Legal Planning Analysis at the Kosovo Police Directorate, Professor of Forensics at Gjilan College.

leaders, civil society representatives, as well as well-known experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts. as well as from the answers of the student survey on the most serious problems of democracy in Albania, it results that, in the first case, the main security challenges were identified: 1. religious and political extremism, 2. the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on country, 3. corruption, 4. challenges of economic development, 5. international terrorism, 6. challenges of organized crime and criminal activities, 7. territorial sovereignty of the country. Whereas, the student survey has identified the following challenges: 1. the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country; 2. territorial sovereignty of the country; 3. corruption; 4. religious and political extremism; 5. challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; 6. economic development challenges; 7. instability and political conflict in the country. So, the challenges of national security in Kosovo that were identified by 767 respondents turn out to be: 1. The challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country; 2. Territorial sovereignty of the country; 3. religious and political extremism, 4. corruption, 5. challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; 6. economic development challenges.

From the comparative analysis of some answers given for some challenges, it is evident that the perception of the surveyed students has defined the first challenge- 1. the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country with 70%; 2. territorial sovereignty of the country with 36%; while politicians and experts rank the second challenge with 13.8%, experts in Albania 13.6%, internationals 11.1% and experts in Kosovo 9.8%. Whereas, the territorial sovereignty of the country is estimated at the seventh challenge with 8.4%, of which experts in Kosovo 14.8% and experts in Albania 5.7%. Meanwhile, students religious and political extremism list the fourth challenge, while politicians and experts list the first challenge.

From the comparative analysis of the main security challenges in Albania with the main security challenges in Kosovo, it results that in Albania since 767 respondents have been identified: 1. challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; 2. international terrorism, political and religious extremism; 3. corruption; and 4. economic development challenges.

4. Judgment of politicians and experts in both Albania and Kosovo on specific security challenges in Kosovo - comparative analysis.

The main security challenges in Kosovo and the judgment of experts in both countries on specific security challenges in Kosovo - comparative analysis, are presented in Table 5.

Main challenges	Experts from Albania	Experts from Kosovo
Religious and political extremism	15.90%	11.50%
The relations with serbian state challenge and internal impact	17.00%	9.80%
Corruption	10.20%	9.80%
The challenge of economic development	9.10%	11.50%
International terrorism	10.20%	8.20%
The challenge of organized crime and criminal activities	10.20%	8.20%
Territorial sovereignty of the country	5.70%	14.80%
The challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building	8.00%	3.30%
Political instability and conflict	2.30%	4.90%
The challenge of social development	1.10%	6.60%
Challenges of the development of the rule of law	3.40%	3.30%
Improving police and military structures, policies and education	2.30%	3.30%
Emigration	0.00%	3.30%
The presence of the international factor	0.00%	0.00%
Visa liberalization process and EU integration	1.10%	0.00%
Need to improve the capacity of the administration	2.30%	0.00%
Challenges of abuse of power	1.10%	1.60%

Source: Questionnaire 1 "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania-Kosovo, 2008-2015" (completed by public figures and security and justice experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts). Author's elaboration (2016).

Table 5. Main security challenges in Kosovo and expert judgment in both countries on specific security challenges in Kosovo - comparative analysis.

In a tabular way, the comparative analysis of the judgment of experts in Albania and Kosovo shows that 17 main challenges have been identified. The main challenges for experts in Albania on the security situation in Kosovo are: 1. the first challenge is the "challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country" with 17%; 2. the second challenge is religious and political extremism, with 15.9%; 3. The third challenge is the challenge of organized crime and criminal activities, 10.2%. 4. the fourth challenge is international terrorism, with 10.2%; 5. the fifth challenge is corruption, with 10.2%; 6. The sixth challenge is the challenge of economic development, with 9.1%; and 7. the seventh challenge is the challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building, by 8%. Whereas, the main challenges for experts in Kosovo on the security situation in Kosovo are: 1. territorial sovereignty of the country, 14.8%; 2. religious and political extremism, 11.5%; 3. economic development challenges 11.5%; 4. challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, 9.8%; 5. corruption, 9.8%; 6. international terrorism, 8.2%; and 7. challenges of organized crime and criminal activities, by 8.2%.

From the comparison of the judgments of politicians and experts from both countries, it should be noted that the challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, for experts in Albania is the first challenge, while for experts in Kosovo, this is the challenge of fourth, but in the meantime experts in Kosovo have identified the first challenge, the territorial sovereignty of the country, a challenge which experts in Albania have identified as the eighth challenge. This challenge is related to the relations with the Serbian state and is related to the issue of Mitrovica which is and remains very important for the future. Regarding religious and political extremism, the experts of the two countries have defined it as the second challenge and here they agree. Experts also agree on the fifth challenge, corruption. Experts in Kosovo consider the challenges of economic development to be the third challenge and then consider international terrorism, organized crime and criminal activities, unlike experts in Albania who consider the third challenge to be the challenges of organized crime and criminal activities and international terrorism. Also, experts in Albania see the challenges of consolidating democracy and state formation as the seventh challenge, while experts in Kosovo consider the ninth challenge.

Professor Fatmir Sejdiu¹³ It is said that a serious part of the crime is related to the investments made by Serbia to keep Kosovo destabilized for a certain period.¹⁴ While according to Dr. Alfred Moisiu,¹⁵ the main challenges that threaten the National Security of the Republic of Kosovo are three: *“First, solving the problems with Serbia. Secondly, the inclusion of North*

¹³Prof.Dr. Fatmir Sejdiu President of the Republic of Kosovo (2006-2010), Second President of the Republic of Kosovo, Professor at the Faculty of Law and Political Science of the University of Prishtina, politician, participant in the Constituent Assembly of the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), (1989), member of the General Council in the First Electoral Assembly (1991) and member of the Presidency of the LDK (1992), Secretary General of the LDK, (1994) a position which he currently performs , member of the Central Commission for the organization of the Referendum for the Independence of Kosovo, (1991), one of the main leaders for the preparation and organization of the parliamentary and presidential elections of the Republic of Kosovo, (1992) and (1998), Member of the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo (1992), (1998), (2001), (2004) member of the Presidency of the Assembly (2001), (2004), Secretary General of the Assembly and Chairman of the Committee on Constitutional Affairs (1998), member of the Committee on Cooperation International and Integ Euro-Atlantic rime, has published many scientific papers in the field of legal-historical and constitutional law. He is the author of special books in these fields. Professor at several universities in Kosovo. (The interview took place in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo in Prishtina on 11.12.2015).

¹⁴The interview took place in the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo in Prishtina on 11.12.2015.

¹⁵Dr.Alfred Moisiu, President of the Republic of Albania (2002-2007). President of the Albanian Atlantic Association (1994-2002), Deputy Minister of Defense for Defense Policy (1994-1997), Advisor to the Minister of Defense (1992-1994), Minister of Defense in the Technical Government (1991-1992), Military Leader in various and important tasks (1948-1984), Lecturer at the Military Academy in Tirana (1948-1951), Professor, Doctor of Military Sciences since 1979, author of several books.

Mitrovica in the jurisdiction and administration of Kosovo, and thirdly, the strengthening of the fight against organized crime and terrorism.”¹⁶According to the Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSS) in Kosovo,

*“Violation of the territorial integrity of the Republic of Kosovo is one of the high-level dangers. The activity of Serbian parallel structures north of the Ibar River as well as the lack of access of Kosovo institutions to 18% of the territory raises the need to analyze the situation on a periodic basis. This is especially true given the fact that widespread smuggling in this part of the territory is damaging Kosovo's budget.”*¹⁷

The analyst Mentor Nazarko,¹⁸ states that:

“The main threat to Kosovo, of course, is Serbia. Serbia is interested in the impossibility of destabilizing Kosovo and will at least affect the existence of weak governance, be conditioned and influenced by them and by the Serbian parties in parliament or the government. of Kosovo, or through local factors.

*There is a moment that stands out in the case of Kosovo, the Islamic influence. The education of Islamists in hard-line areas has increased the influence of these aggressive, anti-Western Islamic currents, weakening that connection that should have been traditional. This is a serious threat because it exerts its influence mainly on the younger generation who do not have liberating consciousness. This is a serious threat in Kosovo because the younger generation is a generation that is fully aware of freedom in terms of these concepts. and the great power exercised by the clergy because of its rooting in not interrupting their preaching in social life makes Kosovar society much more exposed to this danger. Their financing from abroad makes the increased risk to Kosovo. In moments when this risk includes other factors such as Serbs, Serbian services who operate in Kosovo under the guise of religious freedom, religious autonomy and this risk becomes even stronger.”*¹⁹

According to the researcher Prof. asoc.Dr.Iva Zajmi²⁰tensions in Kosovo are the result of Serb minorities, corruption and political and religious extremism.²¹Meanwhile, Dr.Aldo Bumçi²²

¹⁶The interview was taken by the author in his office in Tirana, on 18.12.2015.

¹⁷Kosovo Center for Security Studies (KCSS) Kosovo “Assessment of the Importance of the Kosovo Security Council in the Security Sector” Prishtina, December 2008, page 6.

¹⁸Dr. Mentor Nazarko, periodical press and media analyst, advisor to the President of the Republic (1997-2002), researcher, professor, lecturer on "Public Law", "Editorial Page" and "Development Journalism" at the Faculty of Journalism at the University Public of Tirana, publisher of several books and numerous journalistic and scientific articles in the periodical and specialized press of the country and the international one.

¹⁹The interview was taken by the author in Tirana, on 11.09.2015.

²⁰Prof.Asoc.Dr. Iva Zajmi, Deputy Minister of Interior 2005-2013. Professor at several universities in Albania and Kosovo.

²¹ The interview was taken by the author in Tirana on 22.12.2015.

²²Dr.Aldo Bumçi, Minister of Justice, (2005-2007), Minister of Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports (2011-2013) Minister of Foreign Affairs, (2013-2014) Member of the Albanian Parliament (2005-2016), researcher and participant in many scientific conferences.

adds to the problems of religious extremism in Kosovo, Macedonia and Albania.²³ Dr. Ilir Panda,²⁴ is of the opinion that the challenge of fundamentalism is related to the blocking of terrorist and fundamentalist elements in Kosovo, which are twice the size of Albania.²⁵ Whereas, the well-known lawyer Prof. Dr. Ermir Dobjani, is of the opinion that Islamic terrorism in Kosovo has spread due to the Wahhabi sect.²⁶ Sokol Bare, General Director of Police and at the same time Deputy Minister of Interior (1997-1998),²⁷ states: *"Institution building and establishing the fairest interstate relationship with neighboring countries and especially with Serbia."*²⁸ PhD Abit Hoxha, Security Expert in Kosovo states that: *"The north and the structures of Serbia operating in the north, radicalism and violent extremism and non-control of the border."*²⁹

Well-known economic expert and analyst Zef Preçi,³⁰ states that:

*"Kosovo is still quick to talk about national security because today it is under the tutelage, patronage and guardianship of the great powers. It has a large and serious EU presence, it has the same challenges that are basically related to state building. That is, a state functions as long as it presupposes that it has a national security. But as long as the state is prey to lobbies, clans, including criminals, we cannot speak in the Western sense of the word for a concept of national security."*³¹

Ernst Florian Winter states that: *"Kosovo is part of the Southern zone of Central Europe. The Western Balkans is a misnomer. The geopolitical environment of Central Europe has been neglected by both the United Nations and the European Union"* (Ernst Florian Winter, 2007: 25).

²³ The interview was taken by the author in Tirana on 16.2.2016.

²⁴ Dr. Ilir Panda, Minister of Justice (1999 -2000), Deputy Chairman of the High Council of Justice (2003 -2007), lawyer, researcher, professor at the School of Magistrates (1997-1999), lecturer and Dean of the Faculty of Law in Marin Barleti University, representative of the Advisory Commission for Legal Reform at the Ministry of Justice, author of many scientific articles in the field of law in several journals and co-author of the Commentary on Criminal Procedure in the Republic of Albania.

²⁵ The interview was taken by the author in Tirana on 26.11.2015.

²⁶ Prof. Dr. Ermir Dobjani, People's Advocate 2000-2010 (two terms), Well-known lawyer, lecturer at Tirana State University). The interview was taken by the author in Tirana on 10.11.2015.

²⁷ Colonel Sokol Bare, General Director of Police and at the same time Deputy Minister of Interior (1997-1998), Advisor to the Prime Minister for National Security (1998-1999), Advisor to the Minister of Interior (1999-2000), General Director of the State Intelligence Service (2000-2003), Lecturer at the Academy of Public Order (2004-2006), lawyer.

²⁸ The interview was taken by the author in Tirana on 23.01.2016.

²⁹ PhD Abit Hoxha, security expert in Prishtina.

³⁰ Dr. Zef Preçi Executive Director General of the Albanian Center for Economic Research (ACER), Minister of Economy in the Albanian government (1999-2000), politician, expert and well-known economic analyst, professor, author of various publications.

³¹ The interview took place in Tirana, by the author, on 3.11.2015.

"Prerequisite for the security of citizens and the representation of their interests are for a state to be a sovereign state, but also functional" (Bekim Baliqi, 2010: 23).

Kosovo's future status was determined on the basis of a document drafted by Ahtisaari, the former president of Finland, tasked by the UN to formulate a detailed and well-argued option that would serve to determine Kosovo's final status. The Constitution provides that:

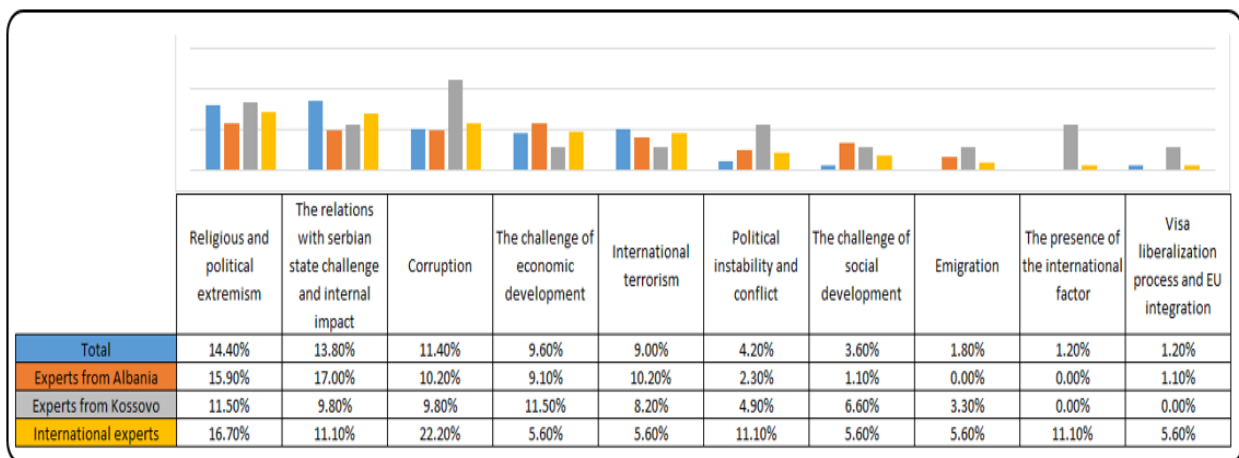
"The Republic of Kosovo may participate in international security systems in order to maintain peace and protect state interests (Article 2/3), but also provides that international agreements, ratified by the Republic of Kosovo, become part of the internal system legal and directly applicable, except when they are not self-enforceable, which would require the enactment of a law. These international agreements and legally binding norms of international law have precedence over the laws of the Republic of Kosovo (Article 19, paragraphs 1 and 2)." (Luan Omari, 2008: 65)."

Whereas, Article 20 provides for the transfer or transfer of sovereignty, because:

"The Republic of Kosovo, on the basis of ratified international agreements, for certain issues, may transfer state competencies to international organizations". of Kosovo (but not on the Constitution), Article 143, on the contrary, sanctions the supremacy of the provisions of the comprehensive proposal over the constitution itself. (Luan Omari, 2008: 65).

International law, international agreements analyzed are in force on domestic legal documents. "They are above the constitutions of these countries." (Mentor Nazarko, 2006: 75).

The main security challenges in Kosovo and the comparison of expert judgments in Albania and Kosovo are presented in Figure 2.



Source: Questionnaire 1 "Democratic institutions and transnational organized crime, Albania-Kosovo, 2008-2015" (completed by public figures and security and justice experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts). Author's elaboration (2016).

Figure 2. Main security challenges in Kosovo and comparison of expert judgments in Albania and Kosovo.

The comparison of expert judgments in Albania and Kosovo shows agreement on several challenges, such as the second challenge, religious and political extremism, and the fifth challenge, corruption. Meanwhile, Albanian experts in Albania and Kosovo see other challenges from different perspectives such as: Challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, experts in Albania see the first challenge, but consider the eighth challenge the country's territorial sovereignty, meanwhile that experts in Kosovo have considered the first challenge.

So, the views of the experts in Kosovo are more current and vivid, due to the good knowledge of the situation lived there, while the experts in Albania have a different view, they think "*coldly*" and say that the challenges of relations with the state and the impact on the country, is the first challenge and apparently through the "*solution*" of this challenge is solved the territorial sovereignty of the country. It is thought that, on the one hand, the daily touching of problems with the Serbian state and the Serb minorities in Kosovo, and on the other hand, the "*severe wounds*" of war, genocide and Serbian terror on the Albanian population in Kosovo, although 16 years have passed since the liberation of Kosovo³² by NATO from the Serbian genocidal occupiers, and 8 years since the creation of the independent state of Kosovo.³³ So again, for experts in Kosovo, this challenge is as important as it is difficult to solve, regardless of the efforts of the EU and the US. The reason is simple, they know Serbs better than Albanians in Albania and other lands, as well as better than foreigners.

Meanwhile, from the careful analysis of the data collected from the responses of international experts, the identification of the 10 main challenges stands out, of which they rank the first challenge corruption with 22.2%, the second challenge, religious and political extremism, with 16.7 %, to continue with the challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, political instability and conflict and the presence of the international factor with 11.1% and to continue with the challenges of economic development, international terrorism, social

³²The Republic of Kosovo was liberated on June 10, 1999 from military intervention and 78-day bombardment by NATO forces against the Serbian occupiers.

³³On February 17, 2008, the Assembly of the Republic of Kosovo unanimously declared the Independence of the Republic of Kosovo.

development challenges, immigration and process of visa liberalization and EU integration by 5.6%.

PhD Walter Schwimmer,³⁴ regarding the question of what are the main challenges that threaten the national security of the Republic of Kosovo, he has stated that:

"While the European Union is facilitating a dialogue between Kosovo and Serbia, it does not seem to be engaged in any form of action monitoring to ensure that the agreements reached are carried out by each party. Formally the UN and now the EU have failed and continue to fail to disengage from the internal affairs of the state. This is made up of corruption that is perceived within these institutions."³⁵

Meanwhile, you are impressed by the answers of experts in Kosovo for the presence of the international factor and the process of visa liberalization and EU integration, as well as the answers of experts in Albania for immigration and the presence of the international factor that are expressed with answers 0.%. From these answers, one can understand the external point of view of the internationals, but also the internal point of view of the experts in Kosovo and Albania who are apparently tired of the long wait, expectations and occasional attitudes of the EU structures in their attitudes towards Serbia. . Dr. Alfred Moisiu, at the international conference on security and peace in the Balkans "held in Tirana, on November 22, 2015" said that: *"The EU is pursuing a favorable policy towards Serbia."*³⁶

³⁴PhD Walter Schwimmer, Secretary General of the Council of Europe (Secretary General of the Council of Europe (1 September 1999 - 31 August 2004), is a politician and diplomat from Austria, has been a member of the Austrian Parliament (National Council) for 28 years , serving as chair of several committees (justice, health, housing and construction) and vice-chair of his political group (Austrian People's Party), currently working as a consultant on international relations and European affairs, based in Klosterneuburg near Vienna. is the Honorary Secretary General of the Maison de la Méditerranée / Fondazione Mediterraneo (Naples) and Chairman of the International Coordinating Committee of the World Public Forum - Dialogue of Civilizations On April 15, 2010 he became president of Megatrend University, the largest private university in Serbia, he resigned from this position in January 2013, researcher, researcher, professor, author of several books, participant in many international conferences scientific workshops and various symposia.

³⁵ The interview was taken by the author on 27.11.2015.

³⁶Dr. Alfred Moisiu, President of the Republic of Albania (2002-2007). President of the Albanian Atlantic Association (1994-2002), Minister of Defense in the Technical Government (1991-1992), Professor, Doctor of Military Sciences from 1979, author of several books. Speech delivered at the International Conference on Security and Peace in Balkans, organized by the Federation of Universal Peace in Europe in cooperation with the Federation of Universal Peace in Albania, Tirana, November 22, 2015.

From the comparison of the attitudes of the respondents on the main issues raised by the internationals, it results that out of 17 factors, 35 sub-factors were identified which highlight a significant weight of sub-factors in the answers of the respondents raised by internationals.

In the factor of *relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country*, four sub-factors were identified: political obstacles and issues related to Serbia, with 10.8%, of which experts in Albania 14.8% and experts in Kosovo 8.2%; the geopolitical situation in the Western Balkans, the monitoring of the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue and interethnic relations.

In the factor of *challenges of organized crime and criminal activities*, three sub-factors have been identified: organized crime; smuggling; and economic crime. In the factor of territorial sovereignty of the country, two sub-factors have been identified: integrity and state sovereignty throughout the territory and issues related to the administration of Mitrovica.

In the factor challenges of *consolidation of democracy and state formation*, three sub-factors were identified: the unconsolidated process of democratic state formation, with 3.6%, of which experts in Albania 5.7% and experts in Kosovo 1.6%; still being a weak state, 0.6%, of which experts in Albania 1.1%; recognition of the state of Kosovo in the world, 1.2%, of which experts in Kosovo 1.6% and experts in Albania 1.1%.

In the factor of *economic development challenges*, four sub-factors have been identified: economic development; difficult economic conditions; unemployment; and informality.

In the factor of *visa liberalization process and EU integration*, two sub-factors have been identified: EU integration and visa liberalization.

In the factor of *improving the structures, policies and police and military education*, two sub-factors have been identified: the lack of a trained army and defense policies and the strengthening of national security institutions.

In the factor of *challenges of abuse of power*, two sub-factors have been identified: the use of state violence and the impact of politics on law and order.

In the factor, *challenges of social development*, five sub-factors have been identified: poor health; poor quality education; the patriotism of powerful people; social media management; and lack of youth perspective.

From the careful analysis of the comparison of the attitudes of the respondents on the main issues raised by the international community on the factor of challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country, international experts answered the sub-factor of monitoring the Kosovo-Serbia dialogue, 11.1%, ie they consider very important the development of this dialogue and its monitoring, while also for visa liberalization, international experts expressed with 5.6%.

So, these answers, on the one hand, express once again the importance and weight of the further development of these sub-factors, and on the other hand, it is understood the necessity of walking at a faster and safer pace in this direction in the future. But international experts through the answers with 5.6% of social media management, it is noticed that they draw attention to the fact that social media should be better managed because for the society in Kosovo it takes on a special importance. Meanwhile, issues related to the administration of Mitrovica through the answers of experts in Kosovo 4.9%, show once again the importance of resolving this key issue in relations between Kosovo and Serbia. Resolving this "difficult" issue will probably remain a precondition for resolving problems related to the challenges of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country as well as the territorial sovereignty of the country, challenges which for experts in Kosovo and in Albania are listed in the first issues assessed respectively by Albanian experts of Albania and Kosovo. As we addressed above from the survey of 702 students these problems are the first challenges related to security in Kosovo.

Conclusions and recommendations

- From the analytical and comparative analysis of the strategic document of Kosovo Security, answers to questionnaires and in-depth interviews of persons with high state, public, social, political, ministerial, parliamentary, senior law enforcement officials, lawyers, researchers , security experts, journalists, opinion leaders, civil society representatives, as well as well-known experts in Albania, Kosovo and international experts, as well as the answers to the questionnaires of law and security students, it is

concluded that: the main security challenges are related closely with democracy and democratic institutions and with transnational organized crime in Kosovo. This consistency is also achieved by studying the document of the Strategic Review Analysis of the Security Sector of the Republic of Kosovo, 2014, it is found that in point 4.4.5- organized crime and in point 4.4.6 - corruption are defined *risks within the territory of Kosovo but it is a transnational / interstate problem, because they threaten and undermine the rule of law and negatively affect economic development and Euro-Atlantic integration* ". So, this is one with the answers of experts, in-depth interviews and perceptions of students, therefore it requires attention and determination in combating this phenomenon.

- The main security challenges are closely linked to democracy, democratic and security institutions, as well as transnational organized crime.
- Comparative analysis has identified 17 main specific security challenges in Kosovo, and specifically; religious and political extremism; the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country (related, mostly, to the Mitrovica issue and which remains very important, at least, for the near future); corruption; economic development challenges; international terrorism; challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; territorial sovereignty of the country; the challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building; political instability and conflict; the challenge of social development; the challenge of developing the rule of law; improving police and military structures, policies and education; emigration; the challenge of abuse of power; the presence of the international factor; the process of visa liberalization and EU integration; the need to improve the capacity of the administration.
- So, the seven main, specific challenges for the security of Kosovo are: religious and political extremism; the challenge of relations with the Serbian state and the impact on the country (related, mostly, to the Mitrovica issue and which remains very important, at least, for the near future); corruption; economic development challenges; international terrorism; challenges of organized crime and criminal activities; territorial sovereignty of the country; the challenge of consolidating democracy and state-building; and political instability and conflict.
- Factors that affect the level of organized crime are: dysfunction of democracy and the rule of law, state capture, weak democracy, domestic internal problems, weak states,

institutions in Kosovo still unconsolidated, as well as weakness and lack of coordination of institutions law enforcement. Other influencing factors are: delays in the integration process, various social influences and changing mentality, nepotism, international political pressure, ethnic ties between the two countries, lack of free movement of Kosovar citizens and prolonged transition.

- From the above reviews and analyzes, it is concluded that: The basic research question that the study raises in relation to the main security challenges in Kosovo, prove the close connection and the great impact that they carry in themselves, national security, security institutions and its challenges in relation to transnational organized crime in Kosovo. The security in the Republic of Kosovo and the functionality of the democratic institutions of Kosovo remain conditional on the prevention, crackdown and fight against trans-national organized crime ”.
- It is recommended that the suggestions of the interviewees and respondents elaborated, analyzed and reflected in this paper be taken into consideration.
- The challenge for the future remains the recognition of the real situation and the fight against organized criminal activities and high-level corruption, the real conduct of the vetting process in politics, justice, public administration, media, as well as building democracy and the rule of law, in order to ensure life, health and respect for human rights and freedoms in Kosovo.

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